

T E N
S E R M O N S

ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS,

BY THE LATE ELHANAN WINCHESTER,

PREACHER OF THE

UNIVERSAL RESTORATION.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Discourses were taken in shorthand by a constant hearer of Mr. Winchester, and were intended to have been corrected and published by him. But as Providence has disposed otherwise, they are presented to the Public in their present state. They were published periodically in the Universalist's Miscellany for the years 1798 and 1799. This mode of publication was adopted in order to disseminate them, and to make them cheap. The candid reader will make proper allowance for a posthumous work.

Nov. 19, 1799.

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M.D.CC.LXX.

A

S E R M O N, &c.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

SOLOMON'S SONG, CHAP. V. 10.

My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

THE Devil has had so much influence upon the heads of even some good men, as to make them suppose that this very beautiful book of the sacred scriptures is nothing more than a dialogue between Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter, and to persuade others that this was the first intent of Solomon in the writing of it; but that he being an inspired writer, the book, notwithstanding the original intention of its author, was typical of Christ and his Church. But let good men suppose what they will, or bad men endeavour by their vain imaginations, step by step, to undermine the authenticity of the holy scriptures, this book contains in it certain and indubitable evidence of the divinity of its origin. There are in it several expressions not in the least adapted to create love, and several remarks that make it certain that it could not have been wrote for Pharaoh's daughter.

Would Pharaoh's daughter have ever said, "Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me, they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." If the brethren of the daughter of a poor Arabian had turned their sister out to keep the

B vineyards,

vineyards, and she had been under the necessity of obeying their imperious dictates, it is not likely that the daughter of the great King of Egypt, who gave several cities to Solomon as a portion with her, should be in such a situation with her brethren, or that had they been so inclined, that Pharaoh would have permitted it.

But of the Church of Christ this is true. Her mother's sons have often been angry with her, they have blackened her character, they have driven her out into the wilderness, they have made her appear as an outcast of society, a mock, a ridicule, a contempt to mankind.—This is indeed one proof of her being the spouse of Jesus: like her husband she bears her cross, and remembers his words—"Woe be to you when all men speak well of you:" and this was spoken of scribes and pharisees, the professing church of that day: and the spouse of Christ knows it, she knows that all that will live godly shall suffer persecution, and that severely, from friends, from men of the same profession of faith, having before them the hopes of glory through the same means; this increases the pains of it, the severest wounds are those given by a friend: O, how severe are the pangs that arise in the wounded bosom of a believer, from the contempt, the ridicule, the reproach of that man who professes to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ! It almost staggers his faith, he trembles for himself, and for his persecutor. But Christians must expect it: "their mother's children will be angry with them." They were with their master so enraged, as at last, under the empty form of law, unlawfully to put him to death. So they likewise served the apostles; Paul suffered many perils from false brethren, and so have the martyrs, and so does the Church of Christ now. If they suffer not death, as in days past, it is because they are restrained, not by the spirit of persecution being destroyed, but by the spirit of the times, which does not permit it to shew itself in imprisonment, tortures, and death.

But there is one mark evident as the sun when it shines, that this beautiful poem refers to Christ and his Church alone: all who know any thing about natural love, know full well that it does not wish for competitors; it is selfish, narrow, confined, and cannot bear, without the greatest jealousy, the least degree of any thing like rivalry; but here the spouse of Christ paints in the most lively beautiful characters,

characters, the glory of her spouse, and points out to the daughters of Jerusalem where they may find him. Here then is a mark which the wisdom of God has caused to be set upon this book, that no profane wit of man may be able, consistent with truth, at any time to turn it into ridicule: for while the love of man and woman is selfish and confined, full of envy, hatred, jealousy, and revenge, this book invites all to love the beloved object: "Whither is thy beloved gone, " O thou fairest among women? Whither is thy beloved " turned aside? that we may seek him with thee," &c. This is indeed the nature of the love of Christ, when it is shed abroad in the heart by believing: it causes the Christian to paint the object of his love in the most endearing animating colours; he shews how great, how kind, how compassionate, how powerful, is the son of God: it giveth such a glorious view of his desire and his ability to help the wants of poor lost creatures, that all around are ready with the daughters of Jerusalem to cry out, "Whither is thy beloved " gone?" We long to see him, to taste of his goodness, to enjoy his favour, to be animated by his presence: O, tell us, thou believing soul, "whither is thy beloved turned " aside, that we may seek him with thee." Was not this your case, O believer, when you first found that Christ died for you? Did not you love him the chief among ten thousands? Was he not to your soul altogether lovely? Did you not wish that all might love him? Was not your heart expanded by this love, wishing that all might come and enjoy him as you then did? How then did your language glow with divine fervour, when you spake of the dying Redeemer; your whole soul as it were breathed in your speech, and every thought appeared as it were alive. The love of Christ, therefore, thus stands distinguished from all carnal love, and by it separates this book from all danger of misapplication by any holy soul; but on the contrary, gives him heavenly language to express the brightness of his thoughts of the greatness of the love of Christ: there not being one passage in the whole book but what may fully and properly be applied to Christ and his Church.

Having thus discovered the glorious subject of this poem to be Christ, let us now speak of his character. When I read this book I am delighted with it, because it sets forth in the happiest form of expression, thy love, O Jesus, to my soul, I see thy tenderness, and my soul runs on the wings of

faith to meet thee, swift as "the chariots of Aminadib." Speak, O believer, can you love the Lord Jesus Christ too much? Can he be too precious unto your souls? Can your hearts be too full of a sense of his goodness? Or can you tell how much he loved you, when he gave himself for you? O, how did he leave the bosom of the Father, and take our nature upon him, becoming liable to its infirmities, suffering reproach, contempt, ridicule, poverty, becoming a scorn, an outcast of society, without shelter, without home: how did he weep over those woes sin had brought upon man, and at last die for us, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. How great indeed! how vast! how unbounded was this love! Surely such love "many waters cannot quench" it, neither can the floods drown it." It rises superior to pain, sorrow, anxiety, and death. It bursts the bands of mortality, and triumphs over Hell and the grave.

This is my beloved. The true believing soul can say of Christ, he is my beloved. all my affections are his. Our Lord told the unbelieving Jews, "If God were your father ye would have loved me, for I proceeded and came forth from the father." Love is here used by him as the touchstone of their religion. Let men boast of their faith, and talk of their works, "he that loveth not is not of God, for God is love." There is no true religion without love being in the inmost soul, guiding all the affections, making every temper and passion of the heart subordinate to it. For God is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and he is love. Therefore love is that spiritual worship which the Father requires: he that loveth fulfilleth the law; without love to God, to Christ, to all mankind, the Christian is dead whilst he liveth; but he that hath this love, hath Christ formed within him, and is alive to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Like Christ he is comparatively dead to every thing else. All things else are counted but as dung and dross, so that he may win Christ. Thou professor of Christianity, hast thou this love for Christ? Is it superior both in quantity and quality, to every other temper of thy mind? If not it cannot be accepted! These are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ: of thy redeemer: of him that bought thee with his own precious blood. "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that taketh not up his cross and followeth

" followeth after me, is not worthy of me." He expressly says, in another place, if the love of our parents, brothers, sisters, wife and children, is not hatred in comparison of the love we have for him, we cannot be his disciples; therefore before our love can be accepted by him, it must be super-eminent unto every other inclination, and the Christian can say thus, I love Christ, for he is worthy to be so loved: my beloved is worthy to be loved, " he is white and ruddy, the "chiefeſt among ten thousands." He is white, pure, holy, harmleſs, undefiled; he never was defiled with an unclean thought, or an unchaſte deſire, no not for a moment. His boſom was like ſnow to fire. If any unholy fire fell upon him, it was immediately quenched by his purity: ſin had no part in him. For though in all things elſe he was like unto man, it was with " ſin only excepted." Chriſt is ſpoken of as being white, pure, holy, as the eternal Father; free from all ſin, in thought, word, or action: as when he was tranſ-figured upon the mount, his garments became by the ſplendour of divine glory ſo white, that no fuller upon earth could whiten it. So was his character at all times ſo free from all impurity, that it was not poſſible for all the malice of his enemies to blacken it: many attempted it, but all their ſlanders fell off from him in a moment. He could appeal to his enemies, " which of you convinceth me of ſin?" He could appeal to his accuſers, and by the bold integrity of his confeſſion, force an unjuſt judge to declare, " I find no fault in him."

He is alſo ruddy, glorious, and beautiful, though once marred more than any man, the contempt and ſcorn of the people; yet when he ſhall come again in the glory of his Father, he ſhall then be a perfect ſtandard of perfect beauty, far exceeding our firſt parents when they came forth in all the beauty of paradifaical innocence from the hands of the great Creator. Paul ſaw him and was ſtricken blind by the ſplendour of his divine glory; and when the holy apoſtle John beheld him, " he fell at his feet as dead." Who can conceive the greatneſs of the glory that could cauſe ſuch an effect. How very beautiful muſt Chriſt be, when all things in nature, beautiful as they appear in their preſent degenerate ſtate, are but ſparks of his beauty by whom they were created. All the glory and beauty we have ever ſeen, are but ſcattered rays of his glory: truly we may ſay of him that he indeed is the chiefeſt among ten thousands. How very highly
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does David speak of him in the xlvth psalm, "Thou art fairer than the children of men : grace is poured into thy lips : therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O mighty one, with thy glory and thy majesty : and in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness : and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the hearts of the King's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God ! is for ever and ever ; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre ; thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness ; therefore God thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." This is a glorious description of the King of Glory. Life, wisdom, and power are ascribed to the blessed Redeemer. Whatever is excellent in the whole creation he possesses in his person, with a something that they cannot possess, incommunicable glory ; the meekness of a Christian is in him united with the Almighty faithfulness of a God ; the tender feelings of a creature ; the unbounded power of a Saviour ; the humility of manhood, the infinite wisdom of deity, all that is amiable, all that is desirable, all that is glorious, center in him. He is altogether lovely ; he is the chiefest among ten thousand. The scripture never fails to point out unto us the failings of God's heroes, whether they be in a Moses, an Aaron, or a David. It is the book of truth and the book of God. It strictly records what has been without any partiality to any man ; yet there are some characters against whom no evil thing is recorded, because no evil was found in them by their enemies. Though the enemies of Daniel persuaded the Persian monarch to make a law to catch him that they might put him to death, it was because so great was his uprightness, that they would not, with all their malice, cast any other stigma upon his character, than that he dared rather to obey God than man. No fault is mentioned of the three worthies who had the courage to resist the command of the great King Nebuchadnezzar in worshipping his golden image, though backed by offers of pomp, wealth, and earthly glory, or in case of refusal, to suffer a most awful death. Neither was there any fault found in Samuel, the Prophet of the Lord ; nor in Caleb and Joshua, his faithful servants. These, and many other characters, the sacred writings record no fault of. But great and glorious

as they were, as he that buildeth an house is greater than the house, so Jesus, the first and only begotten of his father in his character uniteth all that was excellent in all their characters, and is higher in excelling than the highest; surely, then, he is worthy to be loved!

He was likewise great in power to do good, he healed the sick, he gave sight to the blind, he unstopped the ears of the deaf, he caused the lame to leap like the hart, and set free the man whose body was enslaved by wicked demons; he spake and the tempest hearkened to his word, universal nature knew his voice, and by obedience to his will confessed his sovereign power. But great as all these things were, some of them mankind have performed by his permission, and others have impiously pretended to perform; but there was one thing beyond the imitation of man, superior to the boldest impiety of wickedness ever yet to pretend to, that belonged to his character, in him dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily: astonishing thought! Who can fully comprehend it? He had all wisdom. We know, say his Disciples, that thou knowest all things. He searcheth the reins and the heart, and trieth out all our ways.

Omnipotence belongeth unto him. The Father hath given all things into his hands. "Thou hast given him," saith he, "power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." "For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he hath put all things under him, it is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him." Here is then omnipotence in the hands of Christ to the utmost possible extent, the eternal Father being alone excepted. Omniscience likewise is, wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there, saith he, am I present in the midst of them. If he possessed not this, what folly would it be to call upon his name? The Saints have it not, therefore prayer to them is useless; but Jesus is endowed with omniscience, he is therefore an object of worship; for which reason it is said, "Wherefore when he bringeth in his first begotten Son into the world he saith, and let all the Angels of God worship him; and this great this glorious Saviour is our beloved."

Consider likewise his love to sinners; surely this, to poor guilty fallen creatures that stand in need of a Saviour, would of itself alone, be sufficient to engage our affections. To us, indeed, he is the chiefest among ten thousand, none in
heaven

heaven or earth are like him. Who like him that dwelt in uncreated splendour in the bosom of the Father, would have laid by his glory, disrobed himself of his Majesty, and taken upon himself our sin, degraded nature, and after suffering all possible human evils, at last to die a painful, shameful, accursed death for sinners, for his sinful enemies, his sinful, ungrateful, unjust enemies. Was ever love like this? Human love can go no farther than for a man to lay down his life for his friend; and one poor solitary instance of this, in the case of Damon and Pythias, has appeared, to the astonishment of mankind. Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, had condemned Damon to death, and given him permission to retire to his own country to settle his affairs, on condition that he procured a person to remain in prison, under the equal forfeiture of his life, if he did not return by the appointed day. Pythias heard the condition, unsolicited he accepted the offer and Damon was set at liberty. The day arrived, Damon had not returned, and Pythias was led forth to execution. Surrounded by the guards, he walked with a steady pace, and contented air. The tyrant, upon a moving throne, drawn by six milk-white horses, sat pensive and attentive to the conduct of the prisoner, who came to the scaffold, vaulted lightly upon it, and beholding for some time the apparatus of death, he turned with a pleasing countenance, and addressed the assembly:

“ My prayers are heard. The gods are propitious! You know, my friends, that the winds have been contrary till yesterday. Damon could not come, he could not conquer impossibilities: he will be here to-morrow, and the blood which is shed to-day shall have ransomed the life of my friend. O, could I erase from your bosoms every doubt, every mean suspicion of the honour of the man for whom I am about to suffer, I should go to my death even as I would to my bridal! Be it sufficient, in the mean time, that my friend will be found noble, that his truth is unimpeachable, that he will speedily approve it, and that he is now on his way, hurrying on, accusing himself, the adverse elements, and the gods. But I haste to prevent his speed. Executioner, to your office!”

As he pronounced the last words, a buzz began to arise among the remotest of the people; a distant voice was heard: the crowd caught the words, and “ Stop, stop the execution,” was repeated by the whole assembly. A man came

at

at full speed. The throng gave way to his approach. He was mounted on a steed covered with foam. In an instant he was off his horse, on the scaffold, and had Pythias embraced in his arms. Dionysius heard, beheld and considered all with astonishment. His heart was touched;—his eyes were opened;—he descended from the throne;—he ascended the scaffold.—“Live, live, ye incomparable pair!” he exclaimed, “Ye have borne unquestionable testimony to the existence of virtue, and that virtue equally evinces the certainty of the existence of a God to reward it. Live happy, live renowned! and, O, form me by your precepts, as ye have invited me by your example, to be worthy of the participation of so sacred a friendship.

But Christ laid down his life for his cold-hearted enemies; he died, the just one for unjust wicked men, to bring them to God. The patriot dies fighting for his country,—he lays down on the bed of honour,—he has with him spectators of his courage,—and death or victory brings him immortal fame. He knows that he shall be honoured by his countrymen, and that his very enemies shall admire his courage; not so Christ: He had not before him any expectation but of malice, outrage and contempt; and nothing but the power of faith, which by giving, as it were, life to the hope set before him, could make him endure the horrors of the cross, and despise its shame, being supposed to be an impostor, and as such treated with the bitterest revilings and cruel mockings. It was a great thing in him to suffer so cruel a death, when, by the least exertion of his power, he might with ease have destroyed a world in which such cruelties were permitted to be acted, under the sacred name of Justice. We find it very difficult to bear trifles from each other and from mankind, but let us never more dare to complain, let us learn to bear sufferings from Jesus. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep that is dumb before her shearers, so opened he not his mouth. With patient dignity let us silently imitate our master, looking forward to that period when we shall stand before him as sovereign of the world, to receive a reward at his hands.

The words of his mouth were sweet. How sweet, how eloquently persuasive must have been the words of that mouth which could disarm the officers of the furious Pharisees that came against him full of fierceness and rage; but he so charmed them with the sweetness of his conversation that they went

away without touching him, and told their masters, never man spake like this man. It might be indeed metaphorically said of him, that he calmed the tigers, and the lions licked his feet. They not only refused to perform the unjust orders they had received, but even dared to bear also a measure of reproach for his sake, for their masters said unto them, are ye also deceived?

How sweet are the words of his mouth to a poor heavy laden soul, sinking beneath the consciousness of past transgression, and dreading the awful indignation of Jehovah against sin. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you for it is easy, and my burthen for it is light." "Be of good cheer," poor trembling sinner, "thy sins are forgiven thee." O could I repeat unto you all his words that express the universality of God's everlasting and unchangeable love, I should indeed warm your hearts, and under a sense of the greatness of divine benevolence, and the vastness of a Saviour's love, your souls would indeed cry aloud, the words of his mouth are sweet. We tremble at the wrath of the Almighty from a consciousness of the depravity of our nature, and our many departures from the light of truth; but now we behold that Jehovah by his conduct has in our hearts exemplified the truth of his word, "A gentle expression turneth away anger, but grievous words stir up strife." We were enemies to God by our wicked works, but the Son of God has convinced us that by it we were enemies to ourselves, that God really hath always loved, and hath now, by the gift of his well-beloved Son, convinced us of it. His goodness hath led us to repentance, and being now become reconciled to God, with joy of heart we confess that his words are indeed sweet.

Yea, he is altogether lovely. Where has been the man, but Jesus, of whom this can truly be said? Wherever there is the smallest degree of imperfection, that person cannot be altogether lovely; for there cannot possibly be any thing amiable in imperfection. Every human character is imperfect, but the weakness is passed by, the error is lost in the superior excellency of the traits that may belong to the person. In all characters but that of Christ, we may make a debtor and creditor amount, and strike a ballance; but in him there is no possibility of doing it: His character was all perfection: "He was fairer than the sons of men, grace was poured into his lips." He was no doubt lovely in his person;

person ; even in his human body, there appears to have been something particularly pleasing ; for it is observed, that as he grew in stature it was likewise in favour not only with God but with men. How lovely were his thoughts, they were continually of peace and not of evil ; always seeking what good he could do. How opposite the character of Christ to that of Satan, his grand adversary ; the one continually going about to see what evil he can do, whilst it was the business of our Lord to do good. His actions were always good, because the principle upon which he performed them was good. It was a principle of obedience, “ I come” saith he, “ not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me :” He therefore did the works of God. How good is Jehovah, who causeth his sun to rise and his rains to descend upon the wicked as well as the good ? How very benevolent is he, whose tender mercies are over all his works,—who loveth not the death of a sinner, but had rather that he would turn from his iniquity and live ? The Father and the Son were one,—Christ was in all things like him : He testified the greatness of his origin by the benevolence of his nature. How amiable, how altogether lovely was his conduct ! Behold him weeping at the tomb of Lazarus ! See him mourning over Jerusalem, that was about to take away his life ! Look after him as he goeth to Calvary ! Behold him comforting the mourners ! Hark ! he prayeth for his enemies ! “ Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.”

He is indeed altogether lovely. How lovely was he on the morning of resurrection, comforting the poor mourning penitent Apostle, and cloathed in his resurrection body ! How lovely is he to the hopes of the believer, whose expectations are confirmed by it, whose highest ambition is to be like him, and who never thinks of the promises made unto him but by faith ; he looks back to the glorious description that is given of his blessed Lord, and by the view is animated to press forward with fresh ardor in his course,—he runs the race with renewed vigour, and by faith realizes future glory.

How lovely is he in his ascension ! Our friend, our brother, possessed once of like infirmities with ourselves, and therefore capable of feeling for all our wants, and pains, and cares,—he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and stands before the throne of his father for ever, to make intercession for us. Oh, how lovely, how altogether lovely is he!

sitting upon the throne of his glory, and protecting every believing soul that casts his care upon him.

If to us he is now so lovely, only by the exercise of our faith, how much more lovely will he be when we shall behold him as he is? To you that believe, he is indeed precious now; but then shall you see him at the right hand of God, and myriads of angels hearing his voice and proud to obey his command. All heaven shall resound with his praise, and glad earth from her poles re-echo back the sound! All nations shall then worship at his feet, and obey, with holy joy, his will; then shall the earth bring forth her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall praise him; then indeed shall all know him to be altogether lovely, perfect in beauty, supremely excellent in wisdom, power, and glory.

O my soul, do thou now love this Saviour! thou never canst love him enough! thou canst not love him as he hath loved thee. Who could ever have thought that such perfection could ever have stooped to so cruel a death, to redeem thee from the punishment due to thy crimes. May the thoughts of such transcendent love melt my heart to tears, and cause my whole soul to overflow with gratitude at the consideration of such unmerited tenderness, such enduring love. So great, so ardent, so pure is his love, that it might melt an heart of adamant. May it have upon our souls its full effect, that we may believe in him, love him, obey him, and so prepare to meet him in his kingdom, and be for ever with him.

CONCLUSION OF THE FIRST SERMON.

S E R M O N II.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

ISAIAH XXI. 11 and 12.

He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, the morning cometh, and also the night: If ye will enquire, enquire ye: Return, come.

IF politicians can assert that the liberty of the press is for the happiness of mankind, and ought not to be restrained; I can with equal veracity affirm that the liberty of the pulpit is for the happiness of society, and ought not, for the welfare of mankind, to be ever curbed by any power upon earth, if the characters of those who fill the ministerial office are agreeable to the word of divine truth. They ought to be unrestrained in their speech, that they may be able to speak with the more boldness, speaking in the name of Jehovah the Lord of heaven and earth. In every country where this is not the case, the legislators are guilty of the blood of their fellow-creatures, Ezek. xxxiii. 2. and 6. "If the people
"of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their
"watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the
"land, he blow the trumpet and warn the people; then
"whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh
"not warning; if the sword come and take him away, his
"blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of
"the

" the trumpet, and took not warning, his blood shall be upon him: But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. " But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the " the watchman's hand." A watchman ought therefore to have free liberty of speech, when he addresseth a people in the name of Jehovah; and it is incumbent upon him to use aright, without desiring or particularly attempting to please any body of people, or society, or sect, or party whatsoever: neither ought any servant of the Lord Jesus Christ to respect any man on account of his wealth, title, or power. Though Herod, the mighty tyrant of Judah, heard John the Baptist gladly, and did many things on account of what he said to him, yet how boldly did John reprove him on account of his wickedness in taking his brother Philip's wife. John must have known that his reproving him would occasion him to lose his life, yet the solemn office of a servant of the most high God, would not admit his parleying with flesh and blood; his duty must be performed, the consequences must be left with his God. Neither ought any earthly affection to permit them ever to hide the truth of God; for the man who loveth father or mother, wife or children more than Christ, is not worthy of him. I seldom can read without astonishment of the boldness of the ancient Prophets in reproving the absolute monarchs of the earth. Witness the man of God who warned the wicked king Jeroboam when he erected an altar to his idols, that he might prevent the Israelites from going up to worship Jehovah at Jerusalem. Behold Elijah standing before the wicked Ahab; or the poor despised Micah making the same monarch tremble lest he should hear the truth from him. With what almost supernatural courage does Jeremiah speak to Zedekiah, and shew him the awful threatnings of the God of Israel that were ready to fall upon him if he persisted in his disobedience to the warning voice. Sometimes indeed their boldness cost them their lives, but in general they lived to see the fulfilment of their prophecies. A man speaking therefore from the pulpit in the name of God, ought to speak without restraint.

Let us examine, first, the words of the prophecy as they stand—the oracle concerning Dumah or Idumea.

The Prophet had been speaking of the nations that surrounded

rounded Judea, and foretelling their different fates, and taking no notice of any other nations in the world, but of such as were contiguous to Judea, or such as the Israelites had to do with. Edom had been from the going forth of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, one of the most bitter enemies the Jewish people had to do with: At their coming up from their hard slavery in Egypt, instead of comforting them, they met them in warlike array, and refused them a passage through their borders to the land of Canaan, which they well knew had been promised to their fathers by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Notwithstanding the very moving message of Moses, they refused them a passage although they offered to pay for the very water that they or their cattle might drink; and as then, so to the end of their being a nation, they rejoiced at every evil that befel them, and continually sought opportunities to do them a disservice. On this wicked nation God had threatened destruction, whilst on the Jewish nation he only threatened severe chastisement, but had promised that they should exist as a nation while the sun and moon endured. Edom as a nation has long since been annihilated, whilst on the contrary the prophecies have been strictly fulfilled in the preservation of the Jewish people, nor shall all the combined powers of hell and earth be ever able to destroy them. This accounts for the ambiguous manner of this prophecy.—A messenger, a believing Edomite, seems to be represented as addressing the Prophet, and says unto him, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" as much as if he had said, I know the wickedness of my countrymen in past ages, and I know their present iniquity; Jehovah has repeatedly threatened them with destruction. You, a Prophet, stand like a watchman, overlooking the enemies of the people of God: you make known to the children of men that which is coming on, that those who fear God may be prepared to escape the impending vengeance. Say, O Prophet! has the Lord God of Israel delivered you any message concerning my country? Is the measure of its iniquities yet filled up? May I venture to stay in the land of my forefathers, or must I flee for my life? The Prophet seems to answer, I have no good news for your people;—the threatenings of the Most High must be accomplished; as a nation God hath sworn he will destroy them; the morning of their prosperity is passed, and the night of destruction hasteneth on: I am
not

not now commissioned to fix the time ; go your way therefore in peace, and if you still should wish to know, come and enquire at some future opportunity.

In all probability, the enquiring Edomite, dismissed by the Prophet in this gentle manner, returned home to his country, and died in peace ; but the nation pursued its wicked course, and after being frequently overrun by the surrounding nations, was at last, in the time of the Maccabees, entirely destroyed as a nation, those who escaped the sword being incorporated with the Jewish people ; and as not one Christian perished in the siege of Jerusalem, I should suppose not one Edomite escaped.

When this question was asked, many things that had been foretold, then remained to be accomplished, which have now long since been fulfilled. Full seventeen centuries have passed away since vengeance has been poured out upon that nation. A long, dark, gloomy night this has been to Edom, and to many other nations, who were the enemies of the children of Israel, according to the word of the Lord by the prophet Jeremiah xlv. 28. “ I will make a full end of all “ the nations whither I have driven thee ; but I will not “ make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure ; yet “ I will not leave thee wholly unpunished.” The existence therefore of the Jewish people, amidst the desolation of all the surrounding nations, is a wonderful instance of divine providence fulfilling prophecy. They, like the Arabians, have, according to the declarations of God, had the hand of all mankind against them ; yet, in the midst of all, they have been preserved, monuments of just punishment, divine faithfulness and mercy ; whilst all their persecuting enemies, however mighty they may have been, have one after another been cut off, and nothing is now left but the historic page to record that they have ever existed ; whilst their despised, hated, oppressed, feeble slaves still live, and shall soon be exalted from the dunghill of contempt and corruption, to principles of virtue, to the knowledge of Christ crucified, to a throne of dominion,—to be princes and kings throughout the earth. The intimations of God ought therefore not to be slighted : Whatsoever he pronounces must take place : His purposes shall stand, he will do all his pleasure.

Son of man ! said the Lord unto Ezekiel, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel : therefore, thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

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When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. And as from the hand of Ezekiel God would require the blood of those who might perish, if he did not warn them according to the word of God, so will God likewise require at the hand of every minister the blood of those who may perish through his unfaithfulness, if he warn not his flock when he seeth the sword is coming; and this is not only applicable to an inspired messenger of the most high God, but likewise to that ministering servant who shall be appointed by the people. But if he blow the trumpet and warn the people, he shall deliver his soul. Happy indeed is that minister of the gospel who can say with Paul, I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have never omitted to declare, according to my knowledge, the whole counsel of God.

Perhaps some of you may say to me, Watchman what of the night? Can you tell us what is coming on? Do you pass your time in visiting, trifling, finding fault, slander, idleness, in visitings, and labours of little or no consequence? Or do you study the times and the word of God? What can you say, O watchmen! to direct us how to act? I know that some of you will be ready to put such questions to me; they are solemn ones; may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ write them upon my heart. I regard not being self-condemned, let all that is wrong in me perish; daily would I be grateful for personal enemies; the falsehoods they assert teach me patience, and shall soon be forgot; but the severe truths they tell, teach me to know myself; they lay open my faults, and put it in my power to correct my ways.

Paul, writing to young Timothy, exhorts him "to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine; meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profit may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself and unto thy doctrine, continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." He likewise exhorts him "to study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of divine truth." It surely is as great a disgrace to a minister of the gospel not to be as ready to give an answer concerning any part of the word of God, as it would be for a counsellor at the bar not to be able to answer any question at law that his client might put to him. The least that is

incumbent upon him, is to have a general knowledge of every subject in the scriptures ; he is continually to labour in the vineyard of his master, and by night and day to pray to God that he would crown with success the word he has to deliver. And like Paul, the aged servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, continually to say unto others, " pray for us." These are the means by which a watchman ought to gain instruction ; every Christian might in this way daily grow in wisdom : but a watchman is dedicated to the service of God, and in his time and all his employments ought to be separated from idleness and sin, that by purity, by diligence, by faith unfeigned, he may with all wisdom divide the word of divine truth so as to be able to give unto every man that portion he needeth, approving himself unto the consciences of all men that he is a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.

But say you, " Watchman what of the night ? " Yes, it is night, a dark, gloomy night indeed ! In the night counterfeits pass for current coin, the eye cannot search through the false garb that covers them, but with the most careful investigation. Is it not thus with doctrines ? How very many counterfeits are there that pass for truth amongst even professors ? Falsehoods are received from father to son, and spread abroad through the world for the doctrines of the Lord Jesus Christ. O that he, the Sun of righteousness, would arise, and with the bright beams of the millenium morn chase away the clouds and darkness of this night of error and superstition ! then would be seen the full glories of divine truth, and errors would disappear like the shades of darkness before the morning light ; men would then see the beauty of the doctrines of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it would be their delight to follow his teaching voice.

I am certain it is the night of Christianity, because Christians, like men travelling in the night, are apt to mistake each other, owing to the obscurity of the night ; they know not each other ; they mistake one another's characters and principles, and falsehood is taken for truth and truth for falsehood. The man who makes bad coin is guilty, but that man is not guilty who in a mistake takes it for good ; he may lose by his carelessness or misfortune, but is to be pitied and not condemned. It is this mistaking of each other's principles and character which leads them into disputes and wars ; they fight under the banners of party, and often through mistake unite the most discordant sentiments together to fight against the truth. The host of Christians united together
against

against the universality and restoring power of all redeeming love, is not much dissimilar to the vast, unconnected, jarring army which Xerxes of old brought against little Greece. But I trust the believers in the universal love of God will oppose them, not with the weapons of carnal warfare, but with the word and spirit of truth. Then let professing Christians through mistake fight, rage, and accuse; the Christian by his peace and humble walk with God will be up with them, for all their wrath will be cast away; and when the day begins to dawn their adversaries will see their folly, will condemn themselves, and be ashamed before them. Then shall the watchmen in Israel see eye to eye, and an evident distinction will be visible between him who serveth God and him who serveth him not.

In the night ravenous beasts prowl about after their prey; bears, lions and tigers then go forth in search of the unguarded flock, or to seek an opportunity to evade the vigilance of the shepherd. In like manner, evil angels now prowl about in search of their unguarded prey. These are difficult to be encountered; millions of creatures invisible to man, infernal spirits. Ephes. vi. 12. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the high places." These have no good designs towards mankind; these delight to tempt the children of God to sin, that they may accuse them before the throne of the Most High, as they did Job of old; but the night shall soon close, and they shall retire to their dens; for when the day spring from on high shall arise on the millennial morn, Satan and his host shall be cast into the bottomless pit, and be shut up, and sealed for a thousand years, that he deceive the nations no more for a thousand years.

Evil men are likewise compared to ravenous beasts; they compass me about like dogs, saith the Psalmist, I know it is night by seeing these roam at large. Even in London, the most civilized city in the world, when I hear men blaspheme the Deity, and speak evil of the Most High, or profanely use his name, imprecating curses on themselves or others, it surely is night; was it day, the mouths of all would be full of blessings: but sin stalks boldly abroad, scarcely any daring to condemn her. If it was day the whole body of unjust men, whether thieves or extortioners, or those who, while they elude the eye of man by the outward appearance of virtue, but are seen by the penetrating eye of Jehovah to be

unjust and defiled, defrauding men by their weights and measures, by their deceit, cunning, and fraud, of the profits of their labour, would be reformed; they would be confounded and ashamed of their iniquity, and would learn to labour with their own hands, that they might become the benefactors of society, a blessing to mankind.

Was it day, there would be none to rob man of what is more valuable than his labour, his soul; not only by false doctrines, but by inflaming the passions and perverting them from their proper end. Man was created for the glory of his God, that by regulating the animated works of creation, he might create around him universal harmony; but, alas! how many are there who, instead of seeing it their glory to assist their fellow creatures in the paths of virtue, are never pleased but when they can, by inflaming their passions, bias them to all evil. O! it is night, dark night; a night awful with the shades of vice which obscure virtue. Rectitude of principle and of life are, indeed, but too little known; were it day, sin would shew its horrid form, iniquity would be ashamed of the ugliness of its features, and would flee from the haunts of men; should it exist, it would be only in secret, least, should it be known, it should be held up to the reproach and scorn of mankind. Then would truth and righteousness flourish; peace and joy would abound, and earth would bring forth her increase, and God, the tender parent of all, would pour down his blessings upon mankind.

Was it day, men would see their true interests; then there would not be heard the roaring of cannon, nor the sound of the trumpet to prepare the army to battle. Once since the formation of man there was a glimpse of light, a faint resemblance of the brightness of the millennial day, under Solomon, the mighty, the wealthy, the wise; and, during the time he obeyed God, the good. Man then lived happy, and praised God, the author of every good and perfect gift; riches flowed in upon them so abundantly, that through the plenty of gold, silver was a metal but lightly esteemed. Men lived then in safety, every one sitting under his own vine and fig-tree, enjoying in peaceful content the kind bounties of the God of nature. Before that happy reign, and ever since, frequent wars have impoverished the nations, and kept this earth comparatively, a desert uncultivated wilderness. Was the money that has been spent in wars since the time of our Saviour only, to have been spent in cultivating

vating the arts of peace, the whole world would have been a garden, and a hundred times its present inhabitants would have been able to have enjoyed not only the conveniencies but likewise the luxuries of life ; but war has desolated the world, and made the earth barren. But they that shall live when this night of desolation shall close, shall see the Prince of Peace, who shall dispel the clouds of strife and contention, and cause war to be no more ; then every man shall indeed enjoy the bounties of Jehovah, none daring to make him afraid.

But what time of the night is it ? the fourth and last watch : soon shall it close ; and he who shall remain, if amongst the saints of God, shall hail with holy rapture the coming of the Messiah in the clouds of heaven in power and great glory. Then indeed shall the day break, and the sun shall arise in all the fulness of divine lustre, whilst the clouds of ignorance, superstition, falsehood, and vice shall vanish at the splendor of his appearance. The appointed time for God to favour Sion is not far off ; good news to the nations of the earth, Christ will soon appear to put an end to the night of vice and oppression. and on you that fear his name the Sun of righteousness will arise with healing in his wings. I hail the day ! and through faith with joy behold the wonderful things God will do for the children of men when Jesus shall sit upon the throne of dominion, and rule with the sceptre of righteousness all the nations of the earth. Then shall the vallies be exalted, and the high places be brought low, the crooked shall be made strait, and the rough places smooth, and all nations shall behold the glory of God.

The means by which these changes shall be brought about are earthquakes ; they are the instruments God will make use of to level the mountains and exalt the plains ; they shall turn the streams of living waters into the desert and make the wilderness to look gay, and bloom with the rose, the box, and the myrtle ; they shall scatter plenty through the sandy desarts of Arabia, and cover the uncultivated wilds thereof with the lovely charms of vegetation. In those days shall men learn wisdom from the Son of God ; they shall be well acquainted with nature, and shall adore the name, of Jehovah, and magnify him for all his works

How very different is this from the present state of things ! yet glorious and beautiful as the world will then be, the brightness of the millennial day must close in a short but awfully

awfully dark night to some, but the brightest of all days to others, to such as have passed to the regions of glory ; they shall see no more night ; but those whom Satan has deceived shall, in the height of their folly, go up against the Lord and surround the camp of the saints. Then shall indeed the last and most dreadful of all nights come upon them, when the judgment shall be set, and the books shall be opened, and angels and men be judged by Christ and his saints. Then shall the thunders roar and the lightnings flash, whilst the earthquakes shake and burst the solid ground, and from all parts volcanos shall pour forth their melted lava and deluge the globe with flaming desolation ; then shall the earth, and all that is therein, be burnt up ; the lovely farm, the well-built city, the house of prayer, yea even the temple of Jehovah shall yield unto the fury of the all-devouring flame. Then shall the wicked bewail their transgressions, when all this world shall be turned into a lake of fire and brimstone. At that awful moment, of what use will be the riches of this world, its pomp, its power, and all its carnal pleasures, when all Nature shall be melted into one fiery ruin, and the mighty ocean shall itself be turned into flames ? Awful night indeed ! night illuminated only by the gloomy flames of hell !

How dark and gloomy must be the ideas of those who suppose this night must be perpetual, that all its gloomy horrors shall never end ; ideas sufficient to strike a terror through the soul, and veil our brightest hopes, and cast a cloud over the most exalted of our expectations. But a day shall break upon the eyes of mankind brighter than as yet ever has been, a day that never more shall end. I saw, says the Revelator, a " new heaven and a new earth ; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea." It must therefore be of the same substance as this our earth, but of a different form, not having on it any sea ; a glorious place it will be, the habitation of righteousness ; " for the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God." " And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away ; and he that sat upon the throne said, behold, I make all things new."

Is not this doctrine stamped with wisdom, power, and goodness, and agreeable to the benevolent command to pray for all men without wrath or doubting? He that has given the command will fulfil its prayer, and Christ shall subdue all things unto himself, and then resign his mediatorial kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. And when he has thus become to his creatures, night shall for ever cease, and there shall be light without darkness and day without night. O, then, cry unto God and give no rest day or night until he has established Sion, and made her a glory and honour throughout the whole earth.

END OF THE SECOND SERMON.

S E R M O N III.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

DANIEL VII. 9 and 10.

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued, and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set and the books were opened.

THE prophecies of the Prophet Daniel are short, but they are very important, for they contain the outlines of most of the events that have as yet happened, or that shall happen, from the time that he delivered them until the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, when his prophecy ceases. So very particular has Daniel been in some parts of his prophecy, that some have asserted that it was written after the events had taken place; but however individuals, who love not the truth, or who, being too idle to examine whether these things written therein be so or not, may have endeavoured to invalidate these prophecies; yet we, who believe in the word of Revelation, are convinced that they must be truth, because we know that in this prophecy all that Daniel foretold is not yet accomplished, but is now going on, as

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we may daily behold, if we are not wilfully blind to the accomplishment of prophecy, and shall continue so to do, till the whole is fulfilled. This book contains only twelve chapters, yet the learned Bishop Newton declares that he had been obliged to study several histories to explain a small part of it, so full, yet so clear, and at the same time so concise is the revelation of the things that were coming to pass that was given to Daniel.

This prophecy appears to have been given unto Daniel in a vision of the night, in which the dream of the prophet, under the direction of the spirit of God, made known those things unto him which he was about to perform; and the holy man, taught by the word of God, knew it to be prophetic, and recorded it for the instruction of believers in after ages. "In the first year of Belshazzar, King of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream and told the sum of the matters. Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and behold the four winds of the heavens strove upon the great sea, and four beasts came up from the sea, divers one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagles wings; and I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it." The description of these beasts are so very apposite to the empires they were to represent, that it is no very difficult task to apply them. "The first was like a lion." The Babylonian empire, which if not formed by Nebuchadnezzar, was so much increased under his reign, that it was like a new empire, of prodigious extent, added to the old one: it was strong, exceeding powerful; like a lion overcoming all the other empires with which it contended; mighty as the lion in the day of battle, and swift as the eagle in the rapidity of its conquests. But the wings thereof were plucked, when Nebuchadnezzar, the great and mighty Monarch of Babylon, ascribed the glory due to the King of kings unto himself: when he forgot that which Daniel had before told him, that Jehovah, "the Most High, ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." When forgetful of his dependence upon this overruling God, Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed, in the pride of his vain glorious heart, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour

of my Majesty?" Then were his wings plucked, his dignity was taken away, his power vanished like the misty vapour before the solar ray, when there fell a voice from heaven saying, "O Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, the kingdom is departed from thee, and they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; they shall make thee to eat grafs like oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou knowest that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar, and he was driven from men, and did eat grafs as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles feathers, and his nails like birds claws." Before this he had been like a ferocious beast, delighting in carnage and death; but now, when recovered from this humiliating state, how altered! a man's heart was given unto him; he had suffered, and he now ceased from sin. Love to God guided his ways; and as it particularly manifests, or at least ought to manifest the character of the man in contradiction to that of the beast, he with his lips glorified Jehovah, and with his tongue made confession of his name. How changed was the great and mighty tyrant Nebuchadnezzar! He who had proclaimed, that whoso fell not down at his command and worshipped his golden image, should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace: Behold him now, the meek, the humble man: at the end of the days allotted for his suffering, hear him record in all the dignity of royal language, and yet with the piety of a servant of the living God, "I, Nebuchadnezzar, lift up mine eyes unto heaven and my understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation, and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him what dost thou? at the same time my reason returned unto me, and, for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me, and my counsellors and my Lords sought unto me, and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent Majesty was added unto me." Wonderful change indeed! surprising alteration! No longer the self-willed tyrant of mankind, proud, haughty, and overbearing, scattering nations and
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overturning of kingdoms. No longer boasting of his power, but ascribing unto Jehovah the glory due unto his name. Now, said he, Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth and his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

And this sacred truth, not only this haughty Monarch, but all the vain glorious sons of pride shall, like him, confess, "the Kings of the earth that are upon the earth, and the host of the high ones that are on high." Every tyrant who rules over the children of men for his own glory, and only intending his own individual advantage, whether he be Lord over a family or the Monarch of nations, he shall with Satan, the head of the ærial principalities and powers, "be shut up in the prison, but after many days they shall be visited." "At the end of the days" of their judgment, a heart of flesh shall be given unto them; their reason shall return; their honour, and their brightness, and excellent Majesty shall be added unto them; and they shall praise, and extol, and honour the King of Heaven: they shall own all his works to be truth, and his ways judgment; and shall rejoice in the glorious efficacy of that power which they now know is able to abase those that walk in pride.

"And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it; and they said thus unto it, arise, devour much flesh." This was the Persian empire, which, in extent of dominion, was much greater than the Babylonish monarchy which had preceded it. It was like a bear, blood-thirsty and cruel; of which history gives very many horrible instances. It raised itself up on one side, or into one dominion, by Cyrus, at the head of his Persians, who, at the conquest of Babylon, was a subject to the King of the Medes, and general of his army; but afterwards, upon his death, became Sovereign, and raised the Persians above the Medes, and denominated his prodigious extent of dominion by the name of the kingdom of Persia. "It had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it; and they said thus unto it, "Arise, devour much flesh." Sir Isaac Newton, and Bishop Chandler, with great probability, explain these three ribs, as being the three kingdoms of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, which were conquered by the Medes and Persians; and, like ribs, served to strengthen that vast empire. They were likewise in the mouth of the

bear, between its teeth, being very much oppressed by the Persians.

And they said unto it, " Arise, and devour much flesh." All historians who have described the Persian monarchy, speak of it as greedy of blood, delighting in cruelty, exercising, without the form of law, the power of life and death over their subjects; pulling off the skin of men while alive; and for the individual offence of one man destroying a whole neighbourhood. This dominion was the most cruel of any ever exercised; the reading only of their punishments strike the soul with horror.

" After this I beheld, and lo! another like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl, the least had also four heads; and dominion was given to it." This beast represented the Grecian empire, which was first formed by Alexander, surnamed the Great, as the leopard is small compared with the lion and many other of the savage race; yet he is remarked for the audacity of his courage, which often leads him to contend with animals vastly his superior in strength. So Alexander, though inferior to numbers in stature and strength, at the head of only about thirty thousand Greeks, rushed upon, and overcame the Persian monarch, at the head of hundreds of thousands of his bravest troops. This beast had upon the back of it, " four wings of a fowl," denoting the impetuosity of his flight, in twelve years subjugating to himself great part of Asia, part of Europe, and part of Africa. " The beast had also four heads," representing the four Captains of Alexander's army, who shared his extensive dominions among them; " and dominion was given to it." Well might the Prophet observe, " the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." It is God alone is the first cause of all success; it is true, that he maketh use of means in general; but how very seldom is it that human foresight would think the means adequate to the end. What man, who had never witnessed the progress of vegetation, could suppose the mighty oak, whose branches spread wide over the plain, could ever have sprung from the contemptible acorn? Or what politician is there, that would not have condemned the scheme of Alexander, as the extreme of rashest madness, in attempting, with a few thousand Macedonians, to overthrow the wide-extended Persian monarchy, full of troops, troops which only waited the nod of their sovereign, that they might march onward to conquest, or to death? But it was
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not of man to gain dominion, but of God, to give it according to his pleasure: as Lord of the Universe he has a right to dispose of the government thereof; and he doth dispose of them, in judgment, or mercy, as to his infinite wisdom seems best, none daring to say unto them, What doest thou?

“After this I saw in the night visions, and beheld a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth: it devoured, and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it; and it was divers from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.” This beast represented the Roman Empire, which was, indeed, “dreadful and terrible;” no kingdom was before, or has been since, so exceedingly strong, or whose threats were so much dreaded by every other state. The name of a Roman made the nations to tremble. We may observe the terror it struck amongst the nations, from what is recorded of Paul, the prisoner, bound, and about to be scourged, he cries out, “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a *Roman*, uncondemned?” The centurion, terrified at the action he was about to have performed, flew with anxiety to his Commander, crying, “Take heed what thou doest, for this man is a *Roman*!” Wherever the Romans came, they with the edge of the sword devoured the nations, removing their youth, the strength of the nations, into their armies, and sending them to fight their battles at the farthest part of their dominions; they likewise brake in pieces all the ancient forms of government, and by the vast extent of their dominion, might be almost called the masters of the world. “And it was divers from all the beasts that were before it;” divers in extent of dominion, in form of government, and in its political policy as well as duration.

“And it had ten horns,” which, as explained by the angel at the 24th verse, are “ten kings that shall rise,” or, as the phrase in Scripture language implies, ten kingdoms; of which Machiavel has given us the names, 1. The Ostrogoths in Mæsia, 2. The Visigoths in Parmonia, 3. The Sueves and Alans in Gascoigne and Spain, 4. The Vandals in Africa, 5. The Franks in France, 6. The Burgundians in Burgundy, 7. The Heruli and Turingi in Italy, 8. The Saxons and Angles in Britain, 9. The Huns in Hungary, 10. The Lombards, at first upon the Danube, afterwards in Italy.

“I considered the horns, and behold there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the

the first horns pluckt up by the roots." The learned Bishop Newton supposes these to be the exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of Lombardy, and the state of Rome (for further particulars, see his very excellent Dissertations on the Prophecies). "And behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man," denoting his cunning and foresight, and continual vigilance to promote his own interest; "and a mouth speaking great things," explained afterwards by the angel, "he shall speak great words against the the Most High." And what power has, under the pretence of religion, spoken so much against the truths which infinite wisdom has caused to be recorded for our instruction. In ages past he has assumed the title of God, God's vicegerent upon earth. He has taken upon him, under this name, to overturn empires, dethrone kings, and trample upon the necks of Emperors. He has set nations in confusion, and by the dint of superstition, through the power of his interdict, caused the dead of the nations to lie unburied, who have dared to refuse to pay obedience to his will.

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down." Nothing can shew the wonderful patience of the Deity, more than his long forbearance with this fourth monarchy, and its ten descendants, through long scenes of violence, iniquity and persecution, from its first rise, and under all its variety of forms of Government, to the present times. Least Christians overwhelmed by their sufferings, tired out by the long continued persecutions of Heathen and Antichristian Rome, with the doctrines of Christ obscured by unreasonable superstitions, and interested devices of mankind, should be attempted to give up their faith, and stop short in the pursuit of that Crown which they were called to strive after: Jehovah before hand, shewed himself the Governor of the universe; foretelling those things that were coming on for many ages. He declared, that this little horn, "should wear out the saints of the most high." Whosoever has read the persecutions of the papal powers in France, in Germany, in Moravia, as well as in this country; cannot but see, how the power of Antichrist has worn out the saints of the most high. Millions have been put to death, by every species of torture, independent of still greater numbers who had been cast out to want, wandering about as the outcast of society, of whom the world was not worthy. When we consider these things, it is not to be wondered at, that God has taken up so large a portion of the Scriptures, in foretelling the destruction of this power.

"I beheld,"

"I beheld," says Daniel, "till the thrones were cast down." The ten thrones into which the kingdom of the fourth beast was divided; I beheld, I looked forward and saw the downfall of the Roman Empire, and beyond it; even to the hurling down the ten thrones, or kingdoms, which had been erected upon the ruins of that Empire; I beheld them cast down; their dominion destroyed, that union of church and state, which had made the name of Christianity, governed them by principles contrary to the spirit of Christianity; by worldly motives, of wrath, of pride, of malice, of pomp, of selfish carnality and worldly minded craft; instead of meekness, gentleness, and love; using the persuasive arguments of the sword, and legal penalties; instead of the persuasive eloquence of a holy life and conversation; of sacred truth, and the demonstrative power of the spirit of Gods. I beheld them, says Daniel, all cast down; the whole Antichristian system destroyed, trampled under foot, the vengeance they had exercised upon the saints of the Most High came home to themselves; and they, being unsupported by the spirit that was in Christ, were swept away by overwhelming destruction. The angel says to John, in the Revelations, speaking of this period, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto Heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her, even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double, &c. &c. Rejoice over her, thou Heaven, and ye holy Apostles, and Prophets, for God hath avenged you on her." Yes! we ought to rejoice over the fall of Anti-christ; they who have slain the Saints of God, God will revenge their cause, and cut their persecutors off from the earth, he doth avenge common murder. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." How much more will God avenge himself upon them who have dared to destroy his people? What had before been shewed to Nebuchadnezzar in the visions of the night, under the form an image, is in this chapter exhibited to Daniel, under the forms of four savage beasts, describing the nature of those great monarchies, which were to arise from the time of Daniel, and to continue till the second coming of Christ; and were till then to be the persecutors of the Church of God, whether Jewish or Gentile.

After this follows the sublime and majestic description of
Jehovah,

Jehovah, as given in our text. "The ancient of days did sit." Not our blessed Lord, but the Eternal Father; the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For it is said ver. 13. "I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of Man came in the clouds of Heaven; and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him." They would not have brought Christ near to himself; there could not be any greater than Christ to whom Christ could be brought, to receive dominion; it must therefore have been the immortal God, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

God had long since spoken by the Prophet, saying, Jer. xii. 7. "I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage, I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hands of her enemies. Judgment having been executed by him upon his house, the Prophet here represents him as coming back with mercies to his people; and sitting upon the throne of judgment, to execute vengeance upon their enemies. How awful were the judgments they had executed upon the Saints of the Most High! Rev. xiii. 17. "No man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Under the Antichristian power this was literally fulfilled.

"The ancient of days." The eternal Godhead is described by this appellation; he who was before all days, time itself having sprang forth from his eternal existence; he is the God of all ages, ruling with uncontrouled sway, all times and periods; and therefore is justly called the King and God of all the ages. He is the self-existent, the first of all beings. He sat upon his throne, and his "garment was white as snow." David, speaking concerning the Deity, saith, Psalm civ. 2. "Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment." When our blessed Saviour was transfigured upon Mount Tabor, his garment, through the brightness of the light of the glory of God, became white as snow, so as no fuller upon earth could whiten it. "And the hair of his head like the pure wool," denoting its purity, its brightness, and its perfection. "His throne was like the fiery flame," shewing the greatness of his wrath against the transgressions of mankind. "Our God is a consuming fire" against sin; who then can approach the fiery flame? Who can dwell amidst the overflowings of his fury, when he shall arise to take vengeance upon the ungodly, and to cut off transgressors from the earth? "His wheels as burning fire," sublime, awful description of the swiftness

swiftness of his power, when he shall come to punish transgression. "A fiery stream issued and came forth before him," ready to destroy his enemies. How soon at his word were the powers of nature unchained, and the streams of his fire, in overwhelming torrents poured forth upon Sodom and Gomorrah? And how soon, at his command, shall the inundating fiery torrent turn the mountains, hills, vallies, and seas, into one vast burning lake? At his word, in a moment, fire cometh forth to devour his enemies, as he did Dathan and Abiram of old; or as when it came down at the request of the prophet, and destroyed the captains and their fifties. Fire, in the Scriptures is represented as one of the dreadful instruments to execute the judgments of God. God himself is compared unto fire, and we know as little about the nature of fire as we do about the nature of God the first cause of its existence. It is in fact one of the grandest secrets in nature. God, the immortal Father, is in Scripture called by the name of fire." "Our God is a consuming fire." The Son of God is called "the light of the world;" and the spirit of God is compared unto wind: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit." The fire will not burn without the air, and without fire there cannot be light; they are all distinct from each other; the imagination of man may distinguish them, but his utmost art cannot separate them.

How awfully grand is the attendance of Jehovah in the courts of Heaven! Millions of intelligent, angelic beings continually ministering unto him; a thousand thousand stood waiting upon him, whilst ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. I do not think these numbers are given as being exact, but that, on the contrary, they represent the immense multitude of the attendants upon Jehovah as being innumerable. John the Revelator saw in like manner the throne of God, and says that the number of them who attended before him, "was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousand of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour and glory, and blessing." The number of God's servants in the universe are not a few; if we could see aright, we should see their number far greater than we can now conceive; the numbers of the creatures of God are perhaps as innumerable as the drops of water in the ocean; his power is infinite, and the number of beings he

has created, are known only to himself. And though so immense in multitude, he knows the number of the hairs upon the heads of each of them; his knowledge extends to all their concerns, nothing is so vast as to be above his care, nor so minute as to be beneath his notice. When we contemplate the invisible world, it yields to the Christian one continued stream of holy joy, he feels delight arising from the thought that the number of pure and happy beings that love and obey his God by far exceed the multitudes of those that are ignorant of him, or in rebellion against him. I cannot but think that moral evil never reached any part of the creation, but that small part where we dwell. This earth and its airy atmosphere are the regions to which the host of fallen angels and men are confined. These are the regions of darkness, over which Satan ruleth in the hearts of the children of disobedience. When Satan and his host first sinned, this was the Tartarus to which they were confined in unknown chains of darkness; and when this world was created, and man, the appointed Lord of it had rebelled, power was again given to Satan over all confined to this lower world. I think this, because Christ could never die but once, and he died upon this our earth. Upon the supposition that all the moral evil that had crept into the creation was confined to this world, it was wise, it was kind in God, to send his only begotten Son into this world to die, that by his death he might restore the whole creation to its original perfection. But if evil existed in any other part of creation, there also Christ must have died, or the love of God could not have been made known unto them as it has been made known unto us; and the love of God, therefore, would evidently appear unequal, by not going forth equally in tender mercies unto all his works: therefore, as God sent his Son here to die, to me it is evident, that here was the only place of moral evil; and here shall it be confined till all are restored to the image of God, their maker; then may the creature be trusted any and every where; but rebels and traitors are not to be trusted out of their prison bounds. Holy angels may be permitted for wise purposes to come here, but impure beings, like men and devils, cannot go to them; because God will have moral evil confined to its present bounds, until it is totally eradicated: those who have stood virtuous under temptation may safely be permitted to visit the abodes of vice; and see the horrid effects of it, and contrast it with that happiness which themselves experience from their own separation from all

all evil, so that the curse of sin our God will finally turn into a blessing ; a blessing unto them who learn from the sad experience of others, and a blessing unto them who, having suffered, have ceased from sin, and now profit by their own past experience.

The angels are swifter than light : it is computed that the sun is about 90 or 100 millions of miles distance from this our earth ; we know how long the beams of light are coming from that far distant orb to this our lower world, but an angel travels far quicker.

With wond'rous speed the solar beams, like thought,
He swift outflies.

The moment a command is given from the throne of Jehovah, his swift-winged messenger is on this our earth to execute it : how often has a righteous man in danger called upon God, and found that in a moment he has sent his angel to deliver him. When we consider the almost innumerable dangers with which the unprotected infant is surrounded, we cannot possibly account for so many growing up to years of maturity, but for the interference of those heavenly messengers, who, as our blessed Lord saith, always beholding the face of his heavenly father, are in the moment of danger sent by him for their deliverance. We find, indeed, in the 10th chap. of Daniel, that there was an interval of three weeks between the prayer of Daniel and the answer being given to that prayer ; but we are likewise informed, that from the first day that Daniel chastened himself before his God, and set his heart upon the understanding his promises, that his word was heard, and an angel sent in answer to his prayer ; but the evil angel, who had the ear of the King of Persia, withstood him for twenty-one days : this, indeed, is a curious anecdote, illustrating the conduct of Providence in the government of man by the instrumentality of invisible agency. How swift and powerful are the enemies of mankind. In one night an angel slew one hundred and eighty thousand men ; on another memorable occasion, in one night all the first-born of the whole nation of Egypt were destroyed. If the creatures of God, the ministering servants that execute his will, are so mighty, how wonderful in power must he be who formed them ? Tremble before the great and terrible Jehovah, the God of the whole earth ! Tremble before him, ye sons of men, reverence his name, nor dare to disobey his commands.

But the angels of God are the guardian spirits of mankind; our Lord speaks of the guardian angels of infants; the maid servant, in the Acts of the Apostles, thought she had seen the angel of Peter; Paul says, "Are not they all ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto those who are the heirs of salvation?" Jews and Gentiles had the same idea of them; and shall we, who call ourselves Christians, boldly discard such traditional evidence, when supported by the authority of the Word of Truth?

There are some who have formed the strange idea, that all the angels of God were at one time men; but this is an impossibility, for all the human beings that have ever been born into this our world would not amount even to the number of those angels who stand before the throne of God. Compare the Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel, and the Revelations, with the glorious sight which Jacob saw when he called the place Mahanaim, the host, from the number of the angels that he beheld; and likewise Bethel, the house of God, from the glorious angelic attendants of the immortal Jehovah, who, obedient to his voice, ascended and descended, uniting earth to the mansions of Heaven. Whenever we wander from Scripture, we may imagine any thing; but whilst we endeavour to guide even our thoughts by it, though through human weakness we may err, never can we stray far from the regions of truth; from Scripture it is evident the angels are a superior order of beings, possessed of vast power, and knowledge, and love; and yet so humble are they, as to be happy in being appointed by God to minister unto mankind; and, more particularly, to attend upon those, who by faith have become the heirs of salvation.

"The judgment was set;" not that last judgment mentioned in the Revelations, when, "the sea shall give up the dead which are in it, and death and hell shall deliver up the dead which are in them; and they shall be judged, every man according to his works." Judgment doth not take place until after the millennial reign of Christ, and the second resurrection; but the judgment that Daniel speaks of is that which taketh place after the thrones are cast down, and our blessed Lord shall appear the second time, when he shall come in the glory of his Father and his holy angels, without sin, unto salvation; for Daniel says, "I saw in the night visions, and behold! one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of Heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him

him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom ; that all people, and nations, and languages should serve him : his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." It is therefore evident, that this judgment taketh place at the second coming of Christ prior to the millennial reign ; for the kingdom of Christ upon earth, is contrasted with the other great monarchies that had preceded ; they were to have " their dominions taken away," but his dominion was not to pass away ; from various causes their kingdoms were brought to an end, but the kingdom of Christ was to be that kingdom which was to swallow up every other kingdom, and was not to be destroyed by old age, or surrounding enemies. On the contrary, it was to last through the millennial age and when that was closed, it was still to go on subduing all its enemies, until Christ, having subjugated every enemy to his government, destroyed even a desire to rebel, conferred peace, joy, and righteousness, upon all intelligent creatures, it should, in the full zenith of its power, in the meridian splendour of its glory, be resigned into the hands of the immortal God, and pass away, not by destruction but into increased glory, into never-ending felicity. Thus we find the circumstances, the time, and the place, are different in this judgment from that mentioned in the Revelations. That this judgment was set, or appointed, to give the Son of God dominion over the earth, when he shall come to reward all his servants according to their works ; and give rewards unto all that fear his name, both great and small.

" And the books were opened ;" the books of God's remembrance, wherein is recorded the upright conduct of his saints ; Malachi iii. 16. " A book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name : and they shall be mine. saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels ; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." The conduct of the saint of God may be forgotten by themselves, but it is never forgotten by God ; no doubt, the virtuous conduct of Mordecai was forgotten by himself ; contented with having done his duty, he had no thoughts of reward, but a book of remembrance was kept before the King, and upon its being read, it was found recorded that which he had done ; and the consequence was, that his enemy, the man who sought his life, and the destruction of his whole nation, was appointed like a menial servant to array him

him with regal pomp, and walk, proclaiming before him, "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour." So shall it be in that day, the book of remembrance shall be opened, and even the gift of a cup of cold water to a disciple of Christ, because of his being a disciple, shall be mentioned to their praise; then shall royal robes be given unto them; they shall be considered as kings and priests unto God: then shall their enemies see, and be astonished, and with holy reverence proclaim before them; thus shall it be done unto him whom King Jesus delighteth to honour; no more shall stones and reproach be cast at them, but the nations shall shout before them, Hosannah to him that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Then shall no good works be forgotten, the sorrows, the reproaches they have borne, and all their labours of love, shall be brought to remembrance; our God will then open his book, and every work of obedience shall be brought to light: well pleased at the recollection of them, the guardian angels of the saints shall say, For this, and that, and the other acts of obedience, no honour has been done unto them; now shall they be honoured for their good confession, before men and angels, according to the promises made unto them by him who is the true and faithful. He will prove to them the awful truth of that saying, "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord." Yes, Jesus the Mediator shall come as Judge, and shall not keep silence; he will cause the books of remembrance to be opened before his friends and enemies; then shall the good deeds of the one be abundantly rewarded, and all the evil deeds, even to the hard sayings of the other, shall be brought against them.

Consider the majesty of God; what an awful subject is this? What are the monarchs of the earth compared with him? He treads upon princes like worms, and the nations of the earth are but like grasshoppers before him. Baxter very justly observes, that monarchs are but as the great worms of the earth, and their subjects the little ones, before God. When, indeed, we think aright of the majesty of God, and our own littleness, we must be humbled at the thought; we must reverence, we must obey him. Shall not God employ our thoughts? What subject so worthy of them as he, our Creator, our Preserver, our Restorer? What subject so grand as the majesty of Jehovah, before whose presence the nations are as nothing, and lighter than vanity.

Consider the justice of God! He rewardeth every man according

according to his works ; he is just in all his ways ; the Judge of all the earth will do right ; he is no respecter of persons, but out of every nation, he that feareth God, and doeth righteousness, shall be accepted of him. He has patience, and long forbearance ; he is not in haste to punish ; judgment is the strange work of Jehovah ; but though slow in the execution of his threatenings, yet, unless prevented by repentance, his justice will repay ; the just retribution of God is sure ; it overtakes every guilty and unreformed man, and will likewise overtake every proud, unjust, cruel nation : long did he forbear with the ante-deluvian race, with the Canaanites, with his servants the Jews, with all the nations of the earth. Oh ! how long has he borne with the desolating powers of Antichrist ; he has permitted them, in his astonishing forbearance, to spread confusion, slaughter, and death, for twelve hundred and sixty years over his Church, but the days of his patience are exhausted ; I will arise, saith my God, I will pour out my vengeance upon their iniquities ; no longer shall their guilt, their pride, their oppressions, their cruelties, be hidden ; I will demolish every power that protecteth them ; I will give them blood to drink, for they are worthy.

It is a dangerous thing to be the enemy of God ; he waits long before he is willing to correct ; he loveth not the sorrows, groans, and pains of his creatures ; but he loveth us ; happy we cannot be unless we love him ; we cannot love him unless we are acquainted with him ; to know him is not possible, whilst wrath, malice, and self-will continue ; if, therefore, we will not lay them all at his feet, and follow Christ, we must in this life experience affliction ; should we escape it, still life is short ; and if we are found enemies to God by wicked works, what shall we have to endure ? It is, indeed, a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God, for our God is a consuming fire ; he can destroy both soul and body in hell. O ! then, love the Lord your God ; bless the hand that leads you to the knowledge of his salvation. O ! examine your hearts, and try yourselves if you are his enemies, or if you love and fear his name ; if your heart boweth down to his justice, obeyeth his commands, and longeth for the coming of Christ : if you do these things, calm resignation shall fill your souls with peace ; happy shall you be here, and happy shall you be in the kingdom of your Lord.

END OF THE THIRD SERMON.

S E R M O N IV.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

MARK XIV. 29.

*The Son of Man indeed goeth, as it is written of him ;
but wo to that man by whom the Son of Man is be-
trayed ; good were it for that man if he had never
been born.*

THIS passage of Scripture has been thought by some to be the strongest that could possibly be brought against the doctrine of God's universal and efficacious love ; I think there are stronger passages than this, though no objections from Scripture or reason can be brought sufficiently strong to be called unanswerable ; but, on the contrary, a little reflection will, without many words, convince any candid and unprejudiced mind, that those very passages, or arguments, will, without any distortion of them, be easily made to prove the truth of that doctrine they were brought to condemn.

The sin of Judas was exceedingly great, let his motives have been what they might ; for the greatness or smallness of a sin depends not on the enormity of the act, but on the motives that led to it ; the killing of a man may be justifiable self-defence ; the wounding of a man may, on the contrary, be the compassing his death, murder ! both by the laws of God and man. Three motives are generally ascribed to Judas as the cause of his conduct : 1st. Malice against the Saviour for so frequently distinguishing him in his discourses, and at last pointing him out in the presence of the rest of the disciples

disciples as the individual person who should betray him. It is said, from that time the Devil entered into Judas: like Satan, instead of correcting his bad principle, he gave up his whole soul to revenge, and determined to destroy the earthly existence of his master, because that master knew the depravity of his heart. If this motive for the conduct of Judas could be established, it would prove the basest motive that could possibly have actuated him, for it is a great crime to imagine the death of any one, a greater to endeavour to put that imagination in a way to be completed; this is malice prepense; by the laws of every civilized nation, it would be called wilful murder.

2. The next motive ascribed to Judas, is avarice; this they say is demonstrable from the epithets which are applied to him, a devil, a thief, and from his bearing the bag. I suspect much the truth of this most commonly received motive for his conduct; had he been a thief, or a covetous man, would he have been trusted with the bag which contained that which was to supply all their wants? Our Lord needed not that any one should tell him what was in man, for he read the heart, and would not make any one to sin by putting them into an office where the temptation was greater than they, from their peculiar propensity, could have resisted; he was not the tempter of men, but their Saviour, and came not to destroy the souls of men, but to seek and restore that which was lost. If avarice had caused Judas to betray his master, when we consider how wealthy a party he had to deal with, the Sadducees and Pharisees, the rich, the most opulent men of the nation, is it not reasonable to suppose that he would have made a demand of wealth equal to his avaricious disposition, but how trifling was the sum he required, thirty pieces of silver; it appears from the smallness of it, that avarice was not, could not be his motive.

I remember that many years since I read a book which I have not from that time ever been able to meet with, this book laid down a motive for the conduct of Judas which to me appears to be the most rational and consistent with the rest of his conduct of any motive whatever that has since been ascribed unto him, and this motive was ambition; Judas appears to have possessed a very large portion of that ambition which the rest of the disciples exhibited in their conduct on various occasions; they all appear with the rest of the Jewish nation to have expected that the Messiah would become at that time a Saviour unto Israel from the hand of

the Romans. They could not behold him first crucified, and then exalted to the right hand of God, to have all power given unto him both in Heaven and in earth, that at the time appointed by the Father he might come in the clouds of Heaven, attended by the Angels of God, and the Spirits of the Just made perfect, to take unto himself the dominion of the earth, and sitting peculiarly as King upon the throne of David, through the Jewish nation, to govern all the world: hence arose the contempt of the Jews for the mean appearance of Jesus, and hence followed frequent disputes who should be the greatest in the promised kingdom amongst them who believed on him, hence they expected that he would soon cast off his disguise, and shew the glory of his character to that nation who would have repeatedly made him King, and to the temporal exaltation of his faithful disciples. Led astray from the path of duty, through this principle of ambition, I conceive Judas to have been, when he betrayed his master: many were the times in which Judas had seen that all power was given unto Christ both in Heaven and in earth; he had seen the winds obey his voice, he had likewise beheld that creative powers belonged unto him when he caused the lopt off limbs of the maimed to shoot forth anew, as likewise when he fed the multitudes; he had known him when led to the brow of the mountain to be cast down headlong, strike those enemies with temporary blindness, and unnoticed walk through the midst of them; the miracles that he performed must have convinced him that the Father loved him, heard him always, and granted him whatsoever he asked; he had heard Jesus declare that he was the promised Messiah; the hope of the ancient Patriarchs; the Son of God; the King of Israel: seeing all these things, having a heart filled with ambition, doubtless he both hoped and expected that when he had betrayed his Lord into the hands of the Pharisees, his mortal enemies, that when they attempted to destroy his life, he would arise and shake himself as aforesaid, and take unto himself, by the greatness of his power, that dominion which, by inheritance, as also by promise, belonged unto him, that his nation should then have the government of the world, and his apostles, according to the promise made them, should sit upon twelve thrones, governing the twelve tribes of Israel. Doubtless he reasoned thus within his own mind, three years have I followed my Lord, and notwithstanding his repeated declarations that he is the Messiah, and the various manifestations of his divine power, I am no nearer the possession

possession of the promised kingdom than I was the first day ; what can I do to make my Master assume his real character, shew his power, and take unto himself his great glory ? For this purpose I will betray him into the hands of his enemies, I know their rage and malice against him ; when they attempt to execute their wicked purposes, he will, with a word, strike them dead, and then take the government upon his shoulders, and reign from sea to sea, and from shore to shore, and from the banks of the swelling Jordan to the utmost coasts where the raging ocean dashes the rocky ramparts of the earth ; my Lord knows the heart of his faithful servant, he loves me, he will perceive that the desire of his exaltation was the cause of what I did, he will pardon my zeal, and knowing that it was not hatred to his person, character, or office, but love to him, and anxious longing to behold his glory, I shall easily persuade him to forgive me, and on account of my superior anxiety in his cause, be exalted to the highest place of honour in his kingdom, because by my means the prophecies have been accomplished, therefore I shall be received into the greatest favour, and have the highest honours conferred upon me.

That which renders this motive the most probable is that, when Judas saw all his expectations disappointed, his master led like a lamb to the slaughter, and instead of frowning awful terror, beheld him arraigned at the unjust tribunal of wicked men, meekly submitting to all their scoffings, spittings, and contempt, saw him scourged, crowned with thorns, and led forth to be crucified, he appears to have been astonished and regardless of danger ; he manifested his sorrow by hurrying to the priests, confessing his guilt, returning the reward of his iniquity, and when all would not undo that which his impatient ambition had done, the violence of his grief strangled him, as I think the passage might be rendered xxvii. 5. in Math. which says, that he hanged himself, particularly as the circumstance mentioned by Peter of his falling down upon his face, and his bowels gushing out, seems to confirm it, there being instances of very violent grief occasioning such a suffocation.

Great indeed was the crime of Judas, if it went no further than the betraying innocent blood ; when we consider the difference between a state of guilt and a state of purity, we may indeed say, with our Lord, good were it for that man had he never been born. But with how much greater propriety may it be said, when we consider the person of him

whom he betrayed, his friend, his Lord, the King of Israel the Son of God. Let his motives have been ever so pure the awful consequences should teach us never to do evil that good may come, for however we may plead the excuse before men, the time will come when, with anguish of soul and confusion of face, we shall own our condemnation to be just. Judas did thus; how painful were the feelings of his heart, how bitter his reflections. I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood: how did he curse his folly when those who tempted him to evil replied to him, what is that to us, see thou to it. Overpowered by the reproaches of his own soul, groaning under the prospect of the crucifixion of his beloved Lord, the violence of his grief overpowered nature, his inwards swelled, his breath was stopped, suffocation ensued, he fell down on his face, his swollen carcase burst, and his bowels gushed out—awful state! Behold the men who despised his Lord pass by the bleeding carcase, and whilst they approve the deed he had done, curse the doer of it, and brand his name with traitor. Better indeed had it been for him had he never been born; better, far better from the womb to have passed to peace and joy; ignorant of evil, to have gone to those peaceful abodes where the wicked can never trouble, and where no contending passions ere disturb the peaceful breast.

But when we consider the personal consequences it was of to Judas. He had laboured for three years in the vineyard of Christ, and would have had his name, but for this offence, enrolled amongst the ambassadors of Christ, and after a few short years of trial, would have rested from his labors, walking in his own uprightness, till the coming of Christ in glory, then would he have come with him to be high seated on a glorious throne, to reign with Christ, and sit as a Judge over a tribe in Israel. But oh! how altered was his situation by this offence! his apostleship taken away, the glory within his reach by one false step removed, instead of a fulness of approbation for integrity of conduct, confusion of face at the sight of his master would now clothe his countenance with shame; add the personal consequences that keep rising one above another as the effects of his sin, and we shall find no need for endless never ceasing flames to justify the saying of our Lord, good had it been for this man had he never been born, for then would he not have tantalized himself with the prospect of glory, to have sunk into such despair and horrors of mind that the tongue of man cannot

cannot describe: but unsullied by ambition, and uncontaminated by sin, his spirit would have departed from the womb to the realms of peace, where sorrow could never have clouded his brow, where imagination could not paint ideal prospects in all the beauties of the garments of truth, that they might vanish in a moment, and leave him to the horrors of desolation, whilst reflection painted, in deepest tints, the vileness of ambition and ingratitude.

Without bringing in the awful ideas of endless, unceasing punishment, there has been even in the woes of this life something so painful to the feelings of the mind, as to cause even good men to wish they had never been born; and that, although they were assured of their Creator's favour, and were confident of happiness after death. Holy Job, 3d Chap. spake and said, "Let the day perish wherein I was born; and the night, wherein it was said, There is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness. Let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it, &c. because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me, or why the breasts that I should suck? For now should I have been still, and been quiet, I should have slept, then should I have been at rest: with kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves: or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw the light. There the wicked cease from troubling: and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and the great is there, and the servant is free from his master." Again, in the 10th Chap. v. 18, Job expresses the same thought that it would have been better for him never to have been born. "Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? O that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me! I should have been as though I had not been. I should have been carried from the womb to the grave." Yet, was this man afraid of endless misery? Although the day of resurrection is at our door, comparatively to what it was in his day, yet where is the best of men in modern times that expresses himself with a stronger confidence

confidence of faith in his coming, who shall reward every man according to their works, and give rewards to all that fear his name, both small and great. "I know," said he, "my Redeemer liveth, and he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself; and my eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me." And so great was the holy man's confidence in the goodness of his Creator, that he cried out, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:" yea, so confident was he of the integrity of his conduct, that he could appeal to the all-searching eye of the all-seeing Jehovah for the truth of his innocence; and could say, "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his ways have I kept and not declined; neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips. I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." It is therefore evident that he had no allusion to endless misery, yet he wished that he had never been born, and that whilst he had before him a certain prospect of a glorious resurrection, and a present conviction of the integrity of his ways, with the full approbation of Jehovah to the whole of his conduct; for he never retracted any part of his former assertions, but those in which he had dared to call God to an account for his conduct towards him; therefore, without fearing future punishment, good men may wish they had never been born.

We, in like manner, find the holy prophet Jeremiah, 20th Chap. expressing himself in similar language; he had suffered but one night's imprisonment, and instead of considering that those who suffer for well doing the spirit of God, and of glory, resteth upon them, he foolishly charged the Most High, "O Lord! thou hast deceived me, and I am deceived; thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed; I am in derision daily; every one mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil: because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in my heart, as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side: report, (say they) and we will report it. All my familiars watched
for

for my halting ; saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we will take our revenge on him. But, the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one : therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail ; they shall be greatly ashamed, for they shall not prosper ; their concealed shame shall not be forgotten. But Jehovah of Hosts, who trieth the righteous, who seeth the reins and the heart, I shall behold thy vengeance on them, for unto thee have I opened my cause. Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord : for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evil doers."

Here we behold the assuredness of the prophet in the favour of his God ; he was certain, fully confident in him, in whom he believed ; he well knew that he would never leave him nor forsake him ; he looked beyond the present moment ; he saw his enemies ashamed at their past conduct ; he beheld the arms of the Almighty Jehovah around him for his protection, and striking terror into his foes ; yet, whilst the majesty of his protector causes him to burst out into a song of praise, even then, at that moment, he likewise cried out, "Curst be the day wherein I was born ; let not the day wherein my mother bare me, be blessed. Curst be the man who brought tidings to my father ; saying, A man child is born unto thee, making him very glad. And let that man be as the cities which the Lord overthrew, and repented not ; and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noon tide. Because he slew me not from the womb ; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb always great with me ; wherefore came I out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame ?" Here then scripture explains itself, and demonstrates that our Lord had not in his idea at the time a thought concerning the endless misery of Judas, for we may observe that the language of our Lord is always a comment upon the Old Testament ; and in this speech concerning Judas, he uses an Old Testament phrase, a phrase which we have shewn that two good men used, men who were the servants of the Lord, who were his peculiar favourites, approved of by the Searcher of Hearts for the integrity of their conduct, and the perfection of their obedience ; yet they, with a certainty of the divine protection, and the full assurance of future happiness, on account of present trouble, wished they had never been born.

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That which man esteems a happiness, as, being the source from whence pleasure flows, is various, according to the circumstances in which mankind happen to be. In the days of our Lord, when society was about to be destroyed by divine judgment, it was a blessing to have no children, to have no tie whatever that might impede their flight from the awful troubles which, like an inundating flood, was about to overwhelm the Jewish nation; but in the days of Solomon, when the kingdom was blessed with peace and temporal prosperity, that wise prince pronounced him to be a happy man who was blessed with long life, much wealth, and many children. This was the middle age of the world, the most glorious period it has ever yet known, when the sons of Israel, the first born of God, were governed by the wisest of men, even by him who was a type of the Prince of Peace. Yet hear, ye Christians, what this great, (and 'ere he fell into idolatry), this good man hath said, Eccles. vi. v. 3. "If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial, I say an untimely birth is better than he." What would ye, who believe in Christ, think of that man, who, after having lived many years in the enjoyment of the bounties of Providence, and been the parent of an hundred children, and yet should be discontented and unsatisfied with the good that God had given him, and unwilling to lay down this frail body in the dust, from whence it first came; and who, after death, should not have the honours of an elegant funeral, would you think such a one had better never to have been born? Would you not think the blessings of Providence infinitely surpassed the petty honours of a leaden coffin, a hearse and six, escutcheons, feathers, and all the little pomp that attends the burial of the great? I know you would. You look for glory—for immortality. You believe that the power of that God, who hath raised up your blessed master, is capable of collecting the scattered fragments of your frame from the four winds of the heavens, and of reuniting them, after the sample of the glorified body of Christ Jesus. Yet, says the great, the wise, the inspired Solomon, "I say an untimely birth is better than he, for he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness." And what would this be to you, if your name is written in the Lamb's book of life? Let darkness and total oblivion cover your name from

from the memory of the sons of men, so you but have it honoured by your Lord, before his holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; grateful for the blessings you have enjoyed, you dare not to say, with Solomon, That the man who hath possessed such a super-abundance of the bounties of Providence, "hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing," much less dare you to draw a contrast between such a one and an untimely birth, and pronounce in favour of the latter, because "he hath more rest than the other: yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good." Where, says the greatest and wisest of men, is the difference between the child who never was born, and the hoary head laden with glory? It is, saith he, in favour of the child who never came to the birth, for he hath never seen trouble. This language is much stronger than that which our Lord uses concerning Judas; he only said, Good had it been for that man had he never been born; not expressing even a thought concerning his future happiness or misery; and who are we, that we should dare to add to the language of Christ? Will he approve of us for painting, in all the horrors that human language can afford, the sufferings that Judas shall undergo throughout a never-ending eternity? Or will he not rather say, Judgement is my strange work, I came not to destroy but to save; and who art thou that callest thyself by my name, and readest of the contrition of a repenting sinner, and yet so despisest the glorious character that belongeth to me as a Saviour, as to assert that I shall endlessly delight in the groans, and anguish, and despair, of a returning prodigal, or an erring child? How often hast thou betrayed my cause, and by the pusillanimity of thy conduct led thy brethren into evil? If I extend mercy to thee, why not to Judas? If I have overlooked the pride of thy heart, the selfishness of thy conduct, the perverseness of thy ways, the weakness of thy faith, shall I cast off for ever that man who bore for three years the cross with me, that man who shared my sufferings in the flesh, and dared to take a part with me in the reproaches of mankind? Go thou, my disciple, and learn that I love not only to shew mercy myself, but that I prefer a love of mercy, and an exhibition of it in the conduct of my disciples, before hecatombs of burnt offerings, and all the pompous sacrifices that the pride of human nature can cause to ascend before me.

As our blessed Lord did not revile Judas, or reproach him, or speak of him with harsh epithets, no more did his apostles. Compassion and truth dropped from their lips; they felt for him, and mention his name with tenderness, but with veracity, assembled together to choose another apostle in his room. We do not hear them exclaiming against his character, and holding him up in the eternity of torments as an object of terror, lest any of themselves should betray another, or betray their Master by betraying his cause. None of these unkind speeches dropped from their lips; but "thou, Lord, which knoweth the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part in this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." If Judas fell, that he might go to his own place, and such fall was pre-acknowledged by God in the prophetic writing, what man that calls himself a believer in the scripture will be bold enough to assert, that the intention of that Being, whose name is love, was to cause Judas to fall that he might consign him to endless, unceasing misery? If Judas had a place peculiarly called his *own*, I should rather think it was a throne in the kingdom of our Lord, and that his repentance, and public death, were considered by Christ, as a sufficient expiation of the crime which he had committed; for our Lord had before said, that his twelve apostles "should sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Judas was then alive, and our Lord never retracted the promise he then made, and Matthias was not chosen to sit upon the throne prepared for Judas but to fill up the part (which was vacated by his death) in the ministry, and to compleat the number of apostles, who were to be the ambassadors, who were to go over the whole world, to make known the love of God manifested in Christ Jesus, and to beseech men to be reconciled unto the Father through him. But to assert that this place was hell, and that the fire thereof shall never cease during the existence of the immortal God, I deny, and demand of such bold asserters to come to the word and to the testimony to support their bold assertions; and till they do this, with all my candour I must confess that I believe that evil will befall that man who evil thinks.

The souls of children exist before the birth of the child. Elizabeth said unto Mary, "Lo! as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy;" which could not have been unless the mat-

ter of which the babe was formed had been animated by the spirit of life, therefore the children carried from the womb to the grave are the happiest of all human beings; their eyes behold no sorrow, the sound of woe never breaketh upon their ears, anxiety disturbeth not their repose, they feel not the pangs of fear, of doubt, of suspicion, care cometh not near their bosom, their thoughts are not elevated by hope, and then in a moment hurled into despair; but their bodies lay down in the silent grave, there undisturbed it sleeps with the ashes of the wise, the witty, the fair and the great, whilst the immortal part chaunts before the throne of its Father the overflowing song of grateful love. Better indeed had it been for Judas not to have been born, then would he have escaped all the woes of human life, and the miseries of despair; the maddening stings of conscience, awakened by ambition, would have been for ever unknown; ignorant of nought but sorrow; eternity would have been an unclouded day, passed unceasingly in the presence of his God.

The Great Parent of mankind has manifested his love to human nature, by taking at least one third of the infants that are born to himself before they are two years old. How amazing is the providence of God, who seeing all the events that shall happen, in mercy takes away unto himself so large a portion of the human race, whilst they are comparatively innocent, being free from sin, and pain, and sorrow, and uncontaminated by those perverted passions that hurry the grown-up man into vice, judgment, and the second death. Truly without straining the point, had it not been proverbial, our Lord might have said, Good had it been for Judas had he never been born. The days will soon arrive when the same divine love will operate in a different way, Christ shall reign upon the earth, and then children and the fruit of the womb shall be an heritage from the Lord, for all shall know Jehovah, from the least unto the greatest. Thrice happy days, when the scythe of divine love shall no longer be lifted up to sweep the children of men from the earth!

I have been compared with Judas by some who have thought that he was doomed to endless misery, and have been in their esteem found more guilty, and by them doomed to a much severer punishment. Judas, say they, only betrayed the word incarnate, but you the word revealed; the infirmities of human nature might be urged in his favour, but having the whole blaze of revealed truth, your perversion of it renders you far more inexcusable than he was, and your place in

hell tenfold hotter than that in which he was confined : but let me be condemned by man, I shall stand cleared of the charge before my God. I therefore rejoice and give thanks to my God that he hath made known his boundless love unto me, and continually do I bless his name for having called me to proclaim it to the children of men : I mark the day as the happiest of my life in which I first stood up in defence of the universal and efficacious love of God ; for Jehovah saith, Isaiah xlv. 22. " Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely ! each shall say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength : to him all shall come, and " all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed." Since, therefore, Jehovah hath sworn by himself, that unto him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear, every creature must return to his first estate of pure, holy, loving obedience, and every creature must regain his inheritance, and do homage for it to him who is the Great Creator and Proprietor of all, even unto Jesus, by and for whom all things that are were created ; and before this can possibly take place, he will know their sincerity, for he searcheth the hearts and tryeth the reins, and he will not have a divided heart, but he will have the whole heart, and that perfect obedience to his will, which can alone spring from a principle of love.

Bowing and swearing on the part of the criminal, sheweth pardon and protection on the part of the Sovereign ; since then God hath sworn by himself, that the time shall come when every knee shall bow unto him, and every tongue swear unto him, he hath by so doing sworn that there shall come a time when every creature that hath a knee to bow, or a tongue to swear with, shall find that pardon and protection from him which he only as a sovereign Lord of all the earth can bestow. He says, " the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return." Was I therefore to assert that by far the greatest part of mankind should be damned for ever, some few bigots I might please, but I should contradict the word of divine truth ; I should give God the lie, and challenge the faithfulness of his promise ; therefore I dare not do it, for he hath sworn by himself, and the oath shall be accomplished ; every knee in heaven, in earth, and in hell shall bow unto him, and by his name, and in obedience to his will every tongue shall swear. Self
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abased with the consciousness of their dependance upon their God, they shall confess their guilt and depravity, and own that in Jehovah alone is all their righteousness, and from him is their strength. To him alone shall they come with holy reverential joy ; yea, even all that were incensed against him for his providential conduct, or the purity of his truth shall be ashamed and confounded at their past folly, although they rejoice that God is pacified towards them, whilst in Jehovah the seed of Abraham by faith shall be justified, and shall glory in his name.

Unless the Apostle Paul can be said to use vain, empty, high sounding words, he gives in the 1st chapter of the Colossians, the strongest proof of the universal restoration, for he says of our blessed Lord, that he " is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature ; for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers : all things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist, and he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence : for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell ; and having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to *reconcile all things* unto himself ; *by him, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.*" Herethen the Apostle confines the reconciliation of Christ to the *all things* that he created in heaven or in earth ; for it is not likely that he would have changed the extent of the meaning of the words *all things*, without having given us notice ; his not having given us such notice, I cannot but conclude, that if the sinner or evil spirit can be produced who was not created by him, then instances are to be produced who shall not be reconciled by him, for the Apostle draws a parallel between the creation of all by and for Christ, and the reconciliation of all by the blood of the cross, that he might have the willing homage of all that were created by and for him. I cannot therefore but conclude, that the argument of the Apostle proves that the Restoration of all, is as general and universal, wherever Reconciliation was wanted. as creation itself was.

I dare not to depreciate the reconciliation by Christ Jesus, though by not doing it I should lose every friend I have in the world, I must hold it in all the extent which the scriptures declare, and that not because others do, but because my God hath shewed me that it is my duty to do so ; for I have

have not received the doctrine of the reconciliation of all from men, but from the scriptures of divine truth, and I see the beauty of the doctrine, and my soul feels its agreement with experimental religion, having felt its power and experienced the peace of mind, the joy and righteousness that it brings, I charge all you who believe in the doctrine to publish the glad tidings of reconciliation unto all mankind, spread wide abroad the joyful news that God by Christ is reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto his creatures their trespasses and sins, and that finally all shall be subdued to bow down to the sceptre of divine love, and own Jesus the Mediator to be Lord of all to the glory of God the Father. By thus spreading around you the glorious news of universal reconciliation with me, you shall soon behold that it is a doctrine whose fruits are benevolence, purity, and active obedience to all the commands of Christ; and divine wisdom has now in mercy to the children of men called forth various arguments in favour of this doctrine that have been for ages past hidden from man, on purpose that the knowledge of it may harmonize the scriptures, be in agreement with reason, and every attribute of the Deity and the wants of his creatures, and by so doing destroy infidelity from the earth.

There is no possibility of disputing so as to gainsay particular truths. It is a truth that God hath commanded us in his word to lift up holy hands for *all* without wrath or doubting; now, can any man pray for all *without doubting* if he does not believe that God will hearken to his prayer? If the heart is filled with the love of God and man, he may wish it, but he cannot pray without doubting, if he does not believe that his prayer will be answered.

When you first received the pardoning love of Christ in all its freeness upon your heart, did you not at that time perceive there was a sufficiency in him to save, not only you, but all the world; nay, ten thousand worlds had so many needed it? and did not your whole soul long and pant that the whole of the human race might become partakers of it; yea, even your enemies? Would you have left one of the human race unrestored had your power been equal to your good will? Is there one of any nation, tribe or family that you would not have wished that the blood of Christ might not blot out his sins? On the contrary, had you had it in your power, would you not gladly have parted with all so that you might save all? Had you thought your prayers would have been answered,

answered, would you not have asked for the salvation of all? and had you possessed power, would you not have brought all to the knowledge of and obedience to the truth? To these questions every Christian will answer in the affirmative. From whence did they obtain this disposition, from nature or from nature's God? The universality of the experience points to the source from whence it flows—it was from God the Creator of all, that the universal love to all, and the ardent desire to do good to all first arose. If then this beneficent temper came from him, how much more does it dwell in him if the small drop that you, O believer! possess, makes you feel so exquisitely for the happiness of others? how unfathomably deep must the ocean of love be which is in him? Yours is indeed but a drop from the ocean, or a spark from the immortal fire, cannot he then accomplish the purposes of his love? You may desire to do the good which you are unable, your spirit may be willing whilst your flesh is weak, but that which God determines he can perform; he has the means in his power, and knows well how to guide them, and therefore he has determined to restore all, and bring them to the knowledge of the truth: he will do it; altho' it may take ages to accomplish it. This to us makes it appear long, for he acts not rashly like weak man, but consistently and effectually; he will therefore so act upon his fallen creatures, as to restore them consistently with their knowledge and the freedom of their will, but at last "all things shall be subdued into Christ, then shall the Son himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that *God may be all in all.*"

S E R M O N V.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

JOHN XIV. 1—3.

Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it was not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.

NONE of you can possibly be ignorant that man is born to trouble; pain of body, anxiety of mind, frequent disappointments, with various direful effects arising from error, prejudice, and ignorance, are as certain fruits of our present fallen estate, as an effect can follow a cause. By all the experience of all mankind, and by all our own past experience, it is not in the power of any, or indeed every earthly possession, to keep us from anxiety and trouble; cares will frequently cloud the mind, and without something more solid than earthly good, for the soul to rest upon, the mind of man will always find an empty void that wanteth to be filled up; a restless craving of spirit, that panteth for an unknown something to gratify it; a peace, that human wisdom, the most endearing friendship, though attended with wealth, and pomp, and glory, can never give. Behold Solomon, the wise, the rich, the powerful, the glorious; the sons of God listened with attention to the wisdom that dropped from his lips; riches were to him as the sand upon the shores of the
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mighty deep ; nations feared, honoured, and obeyed him ; distant realms heard of his fame, and came from the utmost bounds of the earth to behold his glory. If these things could give happiness, who amongst the sons of men would have had so large a portion of it ? Yet hear him in the fulness of possession pronounce their just eulogium,—“ Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,” empty of solid good, light as the passing shadow ; they fill not up the immortal mind—with ought—but vexation of spirit. For us, it is an animating thought, that infinite goodness has proposed a remedy for all these disquietudes that trouble and perplex the mind in this transitory state. Passing, therefore, from the consideration of what will not satisfy the expansive soul of man, I shall proceed to speak of these things that will render our happiness permanent.

“ Let not your hearts be troubled ; ye believe in God !” What is God ? Where is the descendant of Adam who can explain his nature ? Say ye philosophers, whilst tracing effects to causes, have ye been ever able to trace out the Great First Cause ? Can you tell his form, or point out the mode of his existence ? Where is the throne on which he sits, or the ethereal palace that contains him ? All, and every question concerning him, is as far beyond your answering, as the revolutions of the heavenly bodies are beyond the investigation of the meanest reptile that crawls on the earth.

What is God ? Who can tell ? Who think upon such an elevated subject without being overwhelmed with its magnitude ! Of necessity he must be eternal ; but, alas ! what is eternity ? He must be infinite ; but who can comprehend infinity ? So poor is human language found to be, when it would attempt to pass the narrow confines of finite intelligence. Incomprehensible in his nature, yet he certainly exists ; or we could never have been. Infinite, unbounded in intelligence, must the Great Creator be, or, he never could have communicated understanding to such an innumerable number of beings. Wise is he beyond human comprehension, or he could never have foretold the various occurrences that should take place, ages before the agents in those transactions had an existence. Yes, the Creator of all is, indeed, in power unbounded, and in wisdom infinite, and far beyond being searched out by the circumscribed understanding of his creature, Man.

The same argument that teaches us that there is a God, makes known to us that he is love. It is by inference alone

that we know he exists. The heavens, the earth, animated and vegetable nature, all cry aloud that there is a God. Their order, their proportions, their wonderful economy, in every minute particular, as well as the astonishing regularity in the combined arrangement of the whole mass, unerringly demonstrate the whole to be the workmanship of one all-wise and almighty Intelligence; and the same mode of reasoning by inference must prove that he is love. He could not have any design in the formation of any creatures, but to communicate a degree of happiness adapted to the capacity he had given it for enjoyment. A being entirely and completely happy, could not have a wish but to make others happy also. Undoubtedly he must have as benign intentions as the creatures he hath made. Whence was the beneficence of human nature derived?—Is it acquired by man, or is it an emanation from divine love? Of what use is the misery of his creatures to God; doth their wretchedness give him glory?—if not, the Most High could not have created any being to be finally miserable.

As the works of creation declare the existence of God, and the existence of creation manifests that he is Love; in like manner the whole of his providence manifests his goodness: all that lives, and breathes, and moves, has its existence from him; it is he who supplieth all their wants; it is he that opened wide his liberal hand, and all things are filled with good; that tender mercy, that is over all his creatures, is made manifest by the whole government of his providence. The Creator of all nature becomes the steward of his own workmanship, and condescends to spread the tables of those creatures his hands have formed; it is he that waits upon them, he watcheth all their motions, and stands ready to supply the desires of every heart.

The book of nature goes thus far, but the book of revelation goes still further; it lays open to the understanding of man the secret springs that regulate the providential conduct of duty: there we behold not only wisdom, love, power, and goodness, but heights and depths of them, far beyond what the loftiest imagination of the wisest of men could dare to have thought of. Had it not been for revelation, where could we have beheld the love of the Deity going forth in acts of mercy and benignity to his rebellious creatures. How could the sinner, man, have known that his Sovereign would have looked upon him with a propitious eye, and pardoned his rebellion? Conscious guilt, and the awful ex-
pectation

pectation of deserved punishment would have shook his soul with anguish and despair; but the book of revelation holds forth to man, a God whose hands are loaded with mercies for his creatures in distress; a God not only capable, but willing, to recover them from their present fallen state. A God, whose character is, that he is infinite in goodness, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin. The heathen world, with the book of nature laying open before them, and aided by tradition to read its sacred pages; yet doubted this sublime truth: hence they thought their gods had their bosoms shaken by the same abominable passions that agitated their own troubled breasts; revenge and malice, hatred and cruelty, swayed their sceptres over unhappy subjects; but with our "Jehovah there is mercy, and with him plenteous redemption," Psal. cxxx. 7. therefore, Isaiah lv. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him turn unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." For, Job xxx. 27 and 28, "he looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light."

The belief of the existence of a God is well calculated to give ease under the troubles of life. We are weak and helpless, incapable of foreseeing danger, and equally incapable of averting it when seen. The consciousness of an omnipresent Being, who not only loves us, but who is continually upon the watch to do us good, and who always orders all the concerns of this our mortal existence in such a manner, as is most conducive for our present peace and future glory; is indeed a thought, that must tend to brighten up the dark shades that will continually becloud our temporal journey. It is a belief that will give us joy under the darkest dispensations of Providence, it will cause a ray of divine light to pierce through the gloomy cloud; it will indeed give confidence to our steps, and cheer our hearts with the animating hopes of future glory.

In the awful hour of death what comfort doth the belief of the existence of God afford to the departing spirit of the dying saint. And to you, O ye sons of men, what support would such a belief yield in that trying hour.—For you soon must die,—in a few fleeting years at most,—and perhaps days,—hours,—or even moments, and your mortal existence is over. If you have this belief happy are you; if

your soul is fixed upon the rock of ages, from a firm persuasion that "Jehovah liveth for ever," and, that after death, you shall leave this earth and earthly things, and seek that bright abode, where liveth, in light inaccessible, the immortal God;—how calmly resigned will you meet the awful stroke.—Death, divested of all his terrors, may stand before you, whilst the jaws of the gloomy grave shall seem decorated with the delights of paradise, to welcome you into those mansions of rest, and peace, and joy.

The belief of a God, rightly applied, is, therefore, an animating thought to the believer, in all the various occurrences of life, whether prosperous or adverse, whether painful or joyful; whatsoever may be the scenes in which he is engaged, in them all he beholdeth the otherwise invisible hand that guides every spring for the good of those that love him: he sees that all are but means in the hands of Infinite Wisdom to occasion greater holiness here, that he may give increasing glory in the age to come.

"Ye believe in God, believe also in me;" and a joyful thing it is that we have a Christ to believe in. What a comfort it is to man, that the Son of God took our nature upon him, and became in all things like unto us, sin only excepted. Under every temptation, what a heart-cheering circumstance it is for us to know, thus was my Lord tempted, and he endured the temptation, he became a conqueror over it, that he might be able to comfort and succour us under all our temptations. It is he that appoints our trials, and he well knows our strength; and if for the advancement of our future glory, he permits us to be tried to the uttermost, he will never permit any temptation to go beyond our strength; but will make a way of escape, that we may behold his goodness, rely upon his care, and evermore confide in his protection and assistance.

When the Son of the Highest took human nature upon him, he took not the regal, or the princely dignity, he had not his name enrolled amongst the mighty or the wealthy; no independence of society marked the situation that he chose, but he took upon him the form of a servant; hence all the higher ranks may learn to trust him, for he was higher than the highest of them all; he ruled not like them, a few of the sons of men; but was the chief prince, the king of kings, the governor of the whole earth; therefore the highest ranks of mankind may indeed fly to him for shelter, and cast their
every

every care upon him. But ye lower ranks of society, ye poor dependent sons of men, how has he graced your situation.—Are ye poor?—he was dependent upon the bounty of women.—Does your cottage scarce shelter you from the scorching sun, or midnight blast?—he had not a place where to lay his head. The Creator of heaven and earth, the king of kings, in his own dominions, wanted that shelter himself had provided for sparrows and foxes. Are ye despised?—behold him ridiculed, laughed at, crowned with thorns, mocked, buffeted, spit upon. Is your good evil spoken of?—behold his life, a life spent in the exercise of every act of beneficence, and yet the scorn he was of those for whom he was spending his strength. Do your friends forsake you in adversity? In the hour of danger one of his friends betrayed him, and the rest forsook him and fled. Are you ill-treated and falsely accused?—he was marked as a drunkard, a heretic, a friend of Satan, his character blasted, and to complete their villainy, under the solemn mockery of law, unjustly put to a cruel death. He has therefore given us strength to endure temptation and comfort under all our afflictions in every various situation of life; for he was in all tempted, even as we are; but in all was without sin, for he never yielded to temptation; yet the face of his Father was hidden from him, when under dreadful agony he cried “My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?” With what confidence with what full assurance may we trust him in all the various scenes of life! Jesus, our friend, our brother, our Saviour, he beholds us, he sees our distress, he pities our weakness, he sympathizes with us, he feels for all our pains, he listens to every groan, he will counsel, assist, and support us under every affliction.

The same Jesus is now highly exalted, and sits at the right hand of the Father. He hath taken human nature with him to the throne, and by it he has raised the sons of Adam higher in the scale of beings, higher than the Angelic Host, those pure and Holy Beings who have never fallen from their allegiance. He that was despised and rejected of mankind is now highly exalted, and has a name given that is above every name that can be named in Heaven and on earth; we therefore who believe on him ought to rejoice in tribulation, knowing that he is both able and willing to deliver us from all our troubles.

Men of the world laugh at Religion, and make a mock at the comforts of it; but Religion, a belief in God, a behold-
ing

ing him in the face of Christ Jesus, as reconciling the world unto himself, is necessary to deliver a man from the pain that the troubles of life would otherwise occasion; this Religion alone can give peace in all the scenes of life, elevating the soul above the anxieties of human nature—and this religion is a fruitful tree; some of its fruits are,

1. Resignation to the will of God.—This sweetens the otherwise unpalatable cup of pain and disappointment, it takes off the keen edge from affliction, a certainty of the Divine Government, and the end of it, through resignation, brings forth patience under affliction; and by the experience of Divine goodness, fills the soul with immortal hope. Those who know the chastening hand of an Almighty Father, or who behold the Captain of their Salvation placing them at a post of honour, that, like soldiers, they may manfully endure the fight of faith;—these know the sweets of that resignation which ariseth from a knowledge of the Divine Government; these can testify the holy calmness of mind that it produces; how it levels the inquietude of the soul, and fills the mind; though enclosed in a tortured body or disastrous situation;—with peace,—with joy,—with gratitude,—with Heaven.

2. Faith in God, and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; produces love to God, because he first loved us; and according to the strength of our faith is the greatness of our love. The more we have of this love to the Father and the Son, the more perfect will be our obedience to their commands, the more energy will it give us in the performance of every duty. This Divine love is calculated to diffuse joy and gladness through every situation of life we may be placed in: is it amongst the wealthy and honourable, it gives us an opportunity of manifesting our gratitude to the Author of all good, and of imitating his conduct who opens his hand and diffuses blessings on his dependent creatures. Is poverty our lot?—Our Father appointed it; our elder brother and Sovereign Lord hath borne it; our heavenly Father will support us under it: he is good, and we are unworthy of his tender mercies; let our love be manifested by our grateful dependance upon his paternal care.

3. This Holy Faith produces unfeigned humility; without it there is no genuine Christianity: the cross of Christ humbles the aspiring independence of man; it lays before us our depravity, our weakness, our helpless estate, how utterly incapable we are of ourselves to recover the image of
God

God which we have lost by transgression. Sweet indeed are the fruits of humility, it levels all the tormenting passions of the soul, and enables the believer to pass through the stormy sea of this life without murmur or complaint. With holy Job, in the midst of affliction, we shall cry out, "Naked came I from my mother's womb." The conscious sense of our own unworthiness will prevent our feeling trouble with intenseness, it will blunt the edge of anxiety, and entirely prevent rage, anguish, and despair; and in the fiery trials that attend our journey through life, we shall have this consoling reflection, that if we obtain the favour of God all the troubles that can befall us are not worthy of a murmur, and even they shall pass away like the summer tempest, giving superior lustre by the passed storm. It is thus that the belief in one Supreme and Almighty God, and Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of his love, is calculated to produce such dispositions of mind and such consoling hopes as are fully capable of making the fleeting moments of time not only calm, but joyful, through the glorious consequences that keep continually arising to view; like the ascending hills, one above another, till the spiritual eye, though aided by all the powers of imagination, is lost in the distant prospect.

The goodness of our God has not left us to the powers of fancy to animate our faith, but on the contrary, paints the glowing scene before us with all the brilliancy of imagination, whilst Truth, immortal Truth, guides the pencil with unerring precision, and then commands us by faith to make it our own: it bids us take a survey of the promised glories, to realize them, that we may be supported by them under all the troubles of life, and on wings of faith soar high above all the afflictions to which human nature is subject. "In my Father's house," saith our Lord, "there are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you."

The Redeemer of men did not come to earth on an errand of deception, he had dwelt in the bosom of the Father and was well acquainted with the mansions of glory; he has promised to come again and take us to this glory; yet, lest we should not be fully satisfied with that promise, but faint through uncertainty as we passed onward upon our journey, he has in the sacred writings caused many of those glories to be particularly marked out; with this hope beyond them, that the eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the glories that shall be revealed.

Here

Here below, riches, honours, and pleasures are either shadows, or, like the summer brier, beautiful flowers surrounded by thorns which lacerate the hand that dares to gather them; not so the enduring riches, honours, and pleasures which God hath prepared for them that love him, and hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; these shall not pass away, they are not liable to the fluctuating vicissitudes of human existence, but are built on the promise of Jehovah, and have his unchangeable throne for their foundation.

In this life, a man to be reputed rich must have an house, yet this habitation is but transient; if the winds shake it not, if the earthquake does not overturn it, yet time shall undermine its foundations, the lofty roofs, the solid walls, and all its pompous decorations shall soon pass away; if history records its name, the searching eye of the antiquarian shall search for it in vain, its place shall not be found, oblivion, with all its gloomy horrors, shall cover the once frequented spot, whilst Nature reassumes the domain that art had taken from her; not so the habitation we are promised by Christ, when our earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved; for then we shall have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, like the workmanship of Jehovah, in the sun, moon, and stars, it is strong, enduring; not like the shallow art of man, which builds a palace for a few years: the ravages of time cannot shake its fabric, nor all its vicissitudes moulder away its immortal foundations.

But what is a house here below without possessions? With all the luxuriousness of art bestowed upon it, without a garden or lands, it would be but an ornamented prison. Man was not made for the solitary confines of stone walls, the world was made for him, earth is his habitation, and the lord of the universe cannot be satisfied without beholding his demesnes:—but alas! these demesnes must perish—his inheritance stoops beneath the inclement sky—the howling tempest overturns his labours and roots up his solid oaks—the lightning, thunder and rain, or the want of them, blast his noblest expectations, and overwhelm his inheritance in ruins; not so the inheritance that his Maker hath promised, that is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away; the earthquake or tempest cannot injure it, the blight polluteth it not, ages destroy not its beauty, for God, the great giver of it is its preserver, and time, which now mars inheritances, shall add, with every revolving age, fresh lustre to the incorruptible possession.

To

To be esteemed a great man now, it is thought necessary to have a town residence in that city which contains the palace of the king:—but oh, how poor, how mean is the habitation! it appears grand only by comparison with the contemptible dwellings with which it is surrounded, or from the weakness of the being who erected it. How different from this is that city which is the peculiar residence of the Saints, that glorious city whose builder and maker is God, the walls thereof are like jasper, and the materials of which the habitations are erected, bright, transparent, and dazzling, like the purest burnished gold: comparison here doth not create imaginary beauty, but every house reflects glory upon all, and the whole bespeaks the praise of the Divine Architect who planned, and the Almighty hand that finished it.

This earth is liable to various changes, indeed so much so, that the vicissitudes of life, are become proverbial amongst men. But we look for an higher state; a state that cannot change, or if it doth, it shall be from glory to glory, rising nearer and nearer continually to the perfection of Deity. The kingdom of God is a glorious and happy kingdom, where sorrow and pain are not known, the cares of this mortal life are there forgotten, the laws are righteous and all the subjects happy. It is a kingdom firmly established, no enemy can shake its throne or overturn its constitution. It is firmly fixed on the basis of eternal love, and cannot be moved. Let us then, who are candidates for this kingdom, make our calling and election to it sure, by loving and obeying Jehovah the Sovereign thereof, and placing the most unlimited confidence in his wisdom, and goodness, and power.

Behold, ye sons of men, some few of the blessings that attend the Christian. Honour is desirable among men; they search after it as a jewel of inestimable value. But of how little value is all the earthly honour that can be heaped upon man compared with the honour that comes from God! Here a few mortal attendants may wait upon us, and perhaps despise the object they attend, obey us from fear or interest, and behind our backs hold up our follies and infirmities to ridicule: but at the hour of death behold the Christian's awful pomp! an heavenly convoy awaits him to carry him to the Kingdom of Glory.—Behold ye sons of pride, behold the poor despised beggar, Lazarus!—See him upborne on the wings of angels to the bosom of Abraham in the Paradise of God—what an honour is this! all the solemn pageantry of state that waits upon the carcase of a Dives, com-

pared with this, is less worthy of notice than the yellow varnish when contrasted with burnished gold ; how it exalts the character of a Christian ! the pure undefiled sons of the morning take pleasure in waiting upon the heirs of salvation.

On earth, that man is honoured who is admitted into the royal presence, and permitted to pay personal homage to mortal majesty : but the Christian soars above earthly courts and dying kings—Heaven's awful Majesty he pants to view, and longs to prostrate before the King of kings ; with David he crieth out, " When shall I be admitted into the courts of the palace of my God."

The Christian has felt the infirmities of human nature, and knows his liability to sink beneath temptation ; he therefore looketh forward with holy expectation to that period when temptation shall be no more ; but he shall be in the hands of his heavenly Father, kept in unsullied purity till he shall again appear on earth to reign with his Lord.

The love of praise is in the bosom of every man, and in men of enlarged minds, perhaps, has always been the greatest stimulus to action : with what fortitude have they endured hardships, with what patience have they borne adversity, with what zeal have they pursued their object—to obtain the praise of men, the praise of a comparatively small number of mankind, and that praise intermingled with ignorance, envy, jealousy, hatred, and all the perverted passions of the human breast. But the Christian has before him the approbation of his Creator, the high plaudit of the searcher of hearts, who shall before men and angels approve of his conduct with a " well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world." No envy will attend this approbation ; a consciousness of the truth of it will raise esteem in the breasts of the angelic hosts, whilst the King of kings welcomes them with " Come ye blessed of my Father." Happy indeed the servant of God who has this approbation ; a listening world shall behold him with reverence, whilst the first-born sons of God hail him, welcome to the mansions of glory.

Higher glories still await them when their crucified Lord shall appear in all the glory of his Father to reign as sovereign of the earth ; for they having died in Christ shall rise with him, see him as he is, and appear with him in all the radiant splendor of those morning stars, the first-born sons of God. Then shall they be the priests of the Most High, and their lips shall teach righteousness to the sons of men. Then shall

shall they sit, like Solomon, on glorious thrones, whilst the nations flock to their footstools to catch the wisdom that floweth from their lips. They shall rule the kingdoms in righteousness and create peace amongst the nations of the earth. Then, through their ministration, shall universal joy pervade all peoples, and God, the immortal parent, shall cause the earth to bring forth its increase, he shall pour down his blessings upon mankind, and all the ends of the earth shall praise him.

Crowns are here too often obtained by treachery, and power unjustly got is too apt to be preserved by acts of oppression. The situation of a man implieth not his fitness for it: not so in that kingdom which we look to obtain, for, Jesus, the great sovereign thereof, knoweth the capacity of each, and it is he that will give a crown of righteousness, that fadeth not away, to all that love his appearing; then will their power be fully established in righteousness, not liable to arts of designing traitors, nor subject to the misconceptions of mankind—their thrones shall not be overturned, but shall overturn all their opposers till the end is answered for which they were established, by the full subjection of the whole creation to the will of God.

But higher still shall their glory arise, even far beyond the imagination of man to conceive, unaided by revelation. For thus saith the Lord, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my father on his throne." Astonishing thought! how high doth the ambition of a Christian aspire! unbounded by temporal thrones and the government of nations, it pants after the throne of God, and longeth to sit with his Sovereign on the seat of dominion, a dignity as far beyond that of the monarchs of the East, as the glory of the lunar orb is exceeded by the splendor of meridian day.

Surely the consideration of these honours that await the Christian Believer is sufficient to support him under the little troubles of afflicting life—a life in which, notwithstanding there is much evil, still there is also much good, yea, a preponderating good, good that should call forth continual gratitude. Let the men of the world be discontented and repine under the bounties of Providence; let not your hearts be troubled though a cloud should be before you and your paths should be darkened. You believe in Christ; he has sealed his promises with his blood, that we may have a sure ground for our hopes, a solid foundation on which our ex-

pectations may rest, when we look forward for unceasing pleasures and continual joy. Independant of the glorious promises of which we have been speaking, there are less delights held forth in the word of Divine truth, that there may be a suitable hope adapted to every disposition and situation of man.

Are you in pain of body or distress of mind? You shall be delivered from pain, from sorrow, from sickness, from disappointment, from evil tempers and from death; all inquietude shall be for ever gone; the racked mind and tortured body shall be no more; all shall be peace, calm serenity, meekness, gentleness and love; joy shall arise within, whilst the smiles of peace shall grace the form divine.

Do you love to see splendor, dignity, and glory? You shall see the King in his beauty, Jesus, attended by twenty thousand thousand of the angelic host, in all the glory of his Father—you shall join his train—you shall behold his glory, and be like unto him.

Do you love the sweetness of friendship, and pant for the sight of them whom your soul loveth?—Jesus is your friend and brother, your absent friend; how often have you longed to behold him! How often have you anticipated the joyful meeting! How little and low are the meetings of earthly friends compared to the pleasures of meeting with Jesus! Love and gratitude shall then call forth every endearing affection of the soul, and melt it into all the extacy of love—to see Jesus—him who created us—who died for us—who hath continually supported us under every trouble, and who shall then have delivered us from all our distresses. O my soul, where art thou? the reflection carries me beyond the powers of human language, and fills me with unutterable bliss.

How often have we here read with admiration of the pity and fortitude of the Martyrs and Saints of God!—but there we shall know them—we shall listen to the tale of past ages, and be filled with admiration at the providential hand of Deity, the saints of God, the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs, the patriarchs, will be our companions; we shall hear them recount the wonders of Divine love, and listen with silent rapture to the extatic tale. What scenes wilt thou open to our minds, and how shall we be astonished at this unravelling of such a combination of events! Glory to the Highest will be our song, and obedience our delight.

Here we cannot gratify fully that principle of the human
mind

mind that is formed for action: like Deity itself the soul of man is for ever moving: but O how unlike him in the pursuits which give it motion! But there we shall be made rulers over many things; there will be a variety calculated to give happiness, and a knowledge that shall yield wisdom, that may enjoy the active sphere, by giving that ability which shall enable the soul to fill it up aright. The capacity of man is unbounded as his thirst for it, and he shall then find the works of creation and providence are equally unbounded with his capacity and desires. How grovelling, therefore, must be their ambition who solely exercise themselves with the trifles of this life, and that have no enjoyments but such as are common to the brutes, born as they are to such high enjoyments, born for dominion, and yet contented with being slaves! But you, my dear Christian friends, let not your hearts be troubled at the vicissitudes of life, and the various afflictions to which it is exposed. Ye believe in God! ye likewise believe in the Lord Jesus Christ! Quickly will time pass away, and with it all your afflictions; then, in the mansions of bliss shall you hear the voice of uncreated harmony, and enjoy riches, honours, pleasures, and glories, in the presence of God and his Christ, ages without end. Amen. Amen.

S E R M O N VI.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER,

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

GENESIS XLV. 3.

And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence.

THE history of Joseph and his brethren, notwithstanding it is a true history of facts that have really happened, was not written on account of the things themselves, but because of the important instruction it conveys to all who read it from that time to the present, as also through all succeeding ages till change shall be no more. It teacheth us, by striking facts, never to be cast down at adversity, nor ever to do injustice to those in our power, not knowing how soon the man who now sitteth on the pinnacle of prosperity may be shut up with the children of misery in the habitation of distress; or how soon the slave in the prison of adversity may be elevated to the throne of princes. We are likewise taught by the relation of facts, that Jehovah who sitteth at the helm of human affairs, knoweth how to bring about the most important purposes by those very ways which his enemies take to thwart his designs. On this thought I reflect with peculiar pleasure; Jehovah, my all wise Creator, hath a system for his conduct towards his creatures; vast, intricate, wonderful, glorious, a system that shall restore all his works to more than primæval perfection, and will accomplish all his good pleasure; the wrath or wickedness of his adversaries shall not obstruct the accomplishment of his purposes, and all their attempts to frustrate his designs, shall but serve to fulfill them. How remarkably was this made manifest in the case of Joseph whom God had appointed to be a Great Saviour

to the Seed of Abraham, and to many nations a type of our blessed Lord, the Great Saviour of his people from their sins, and through them all the nations of the earth.

God manifested himself unto Joseph in a dream, and he said unto his brethren "Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed. For behold we were bending sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose, and stood upright; and behold your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf." How doth the selfish pride of the human heart resist all government but that of their own will! they can scarce bear a rival in the exercise of power much less can they bear an equal to be exalted to rule over them, even though by the special appointment of God. Joseph by telling them his dream did not usurp dominion, but only foretold that which should come to pass in the way of Providence; it would have been a time to resist when he began to rule; fraternal affection should have led them into a candid judgment, and true wisdom should have taught them to know that God could have accomplished his purposes in the future advancement of Joseph, quite consistently with the welfare of his brethren, not only so, but to have made their glory and happiness dependant upon it.

Nothing more fully manifests the folly of mankind than their unbounded thirst after dominion, and their envy at the merit of others. The brethren of Joseph felt as men envious at the superior merit of their brother, and hated him because of the divine blessing; they could not bear that he, their younger brother, should rule over them, and sought a proper opportunity to prevent it. Jacob having large possessions of cattle, his sons were his shepherds, and tended them at a distance from the vale of Hebron, where Jacob resided; Joseph and Benjamin being the youngest, stayed with their father. Jacob, anxious for his children's welfare, sent Joseph to enquire after them, no sooner did they see him at a distance, but they cried out, "Behold this dreamer cometh;" and they conspired together to slay him; but overcome by the persuasion of Rueben, who sought an opportunity to rescue him from their wicked intentions, they cast him into a pit, out of which they afterwards took him, and sold him to a caravan of Ishmaelite merchants, who were passing that way to go into Egypt.

When brought into Egypt, the Ishmaelites sold him unto Potiphar, an officer in the army of Pharaoh, and captain of his guard. How estimable is integrity, when it springs from piety,

piety! it makes a man valuable in the eyes even of them who know not God; it leads them to observe the difference of the conduct between that man who feareth Jehovah, and him who feareth him not: true religion giveth a man an holy confidence, it calleth forth his industry, it maketh a man to be a calm, active member of society; this was the case with Joseph. The Lord was with him, and he was a prosperous man in the house of his master the Egyptian; and his master could but notice it, for he saw that the Lord was with him, and made all the work of his hands to prosper. This caused him to have a regard for Joseph, and made him to shew that regard by outward acts; he promoted Joseph to be the overseer of his house and steward of his possessions. This was indeed the true end of religion. It was the leaven of piety fermenting the world. The master sees the conduct of his servant, and is by it led to see the hand of Jehovah. Joseph here treads in his father Jacob's steps, and has, by so doing, the blessing of the God of his father Jacob. The master sees that the Lord is with Joseph, and in consequence he made him overseer over his house and all that he had; and the Lord blessed the Egyptian for Joseph's sake, and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house and in the field. Happy indeed is that master who has an upright, faithful believer for his servant; and happy that servant whose conduct is such as to bring down the blessing of Jehovah upon his master's habitation; more blessed is he than the children of princes, for he is even now an instrument of communicating blessings; tied up by his situation from pouring forth from the horn of plenty with a liberal hand, he by his uprightness calleth down blessings from heaven, and giveth, by his conduct, a thousand times more than he receiveth.

Joseph was a goodly person, a handsome well proportioned man; and his mistress, smitten with his beauty, forgetting the native modesty of the female, not only longed for, but entreated his embraces. But he refused. The situation of Joseph as house steward, placed him in the way of temptation, and gave his mistress an opportunity to tempt his virtue to the utmost, and that by the strongest passion of mankind; but such is the energetic influence of true religion, that it enabled him to overcome the powerful temptation, and to reason with her on the strong principles of gratitude and religion, to bring her back to the paths of virtue. "My master, said he, knoweth not what is with me in the house; he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; in this house there is none greater than

I; he hath not kept back aught but thee, because thou art his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" So strong are the passions of the children of Adam, when not controuled by the higher principles of piety, founded on the knowledge of the character of Jehovah, that like the raging tempest, they swell and beat upon all the puny bulwarks of reason and prudence, until they have swept away every vestige of them. In vain did Joseph reason and display his master's love and his own servile condition. She still intreated him day by day, but finding that she could not shake his piety, watching for opportunity when all the men of the house were absent, she caught him by his garment, and said, "Lie with me;" but he left his garment in her hand and fled. Then she called the men of the house, and said unto them, "See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice; and it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me and fled and got him out:" and she laid up his garment by her until her Lord came home, when she related to him the same fictitious tale.

There is not any word more abused than the word Love. Love is a pure and holy emanation of the Deity; it partakes of his nature, and is only known to dwell in the bosom of the possessor, by the benign actions it produces; it is ever doing good to the beloved object, and the longest returns of ingratitude changeth not its nature; like Jehovah himself it is unchangeable. It manifests itself by kindness, gentleness, patience, meekness, forbearance, tenderness, and ever striving to communicate, and almost creating opportunities of doing good; but love, human love, is a selfish passion, it is continually seeking gratification, it loveth the object for the sake of self, and seeks to do it good for its own enjoyment; unreturned or unregarded, it manifests its perverted nature by hatred, malice, and revenge, as in the wife of Potiphar; when the possessor of it cannot accomplish his purposes, willingly would he sacrifice the honour, character, and even life of the beloved object. "Behold," said she, to her husband, behold the Hebrew slave which thou hast brought to us, came in unto me to mock me, and it came to pass, as I lift up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me and fled out."

It is not to be wondered at that Joseph's master should be wroth with him, and unheard, condemn his faithful servant

to a prison, where the king's prisoners were bound ; doubtless, he was ordered to close confinement, and to be heavily fettered, for it is said by the Psalmist, " his feet they hurt with fetters, he was laid in iron." But even there, " The Lord was with Joseph and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison, and whatsoever they did there he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand, because the Lord was with him, and that which he did the Lord made it to prosper." Happy Joseph, who could thus arise above slavery and imprisonment ! Truly it may be said of the righteous man, all that he doeth shall prosper." It is not with Joseph as it is with too many of the great men of the world, the place did not make the man great. But the man was good, and through his piety; whether he was a shepherd in the fields, a steward of a palace, a prisoner, goaler, or prime minister, he was always great, for he served Jehovah, and his blessing is always on them that fear his name.

" And it came to pass after these things, that the chief butler, and chief baker of the king of Egypt, had offended their Lord, and Pharaoh was wroth with them, and he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound, and the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them, and they continued a season in ward. And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night ; and Joseph came in unto them in the morning and looked upon them, and behold they were sad, and he asked them, wherefore look ye so sadly to day ? And they said unto him, we have dreamed a dream, and there is not an interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, do not interpretations belong to God ; tell me them, I pray you." How concise, and yet how beautifully did Joseph take off their attention from himself, who was about to interpret their dreams, and lead them to the God of Israel, who had given the dreams, and was by him about to give their interpretation ; he was indeed a wise man, for he was intimately acquainted with the fountain of wisdom, and dwelt under a constant sense of the favour of his God. " And the chief butler said unto him, in my dream, behold a vine was before me, and in the vine three branches, and it was as though it budded, and the blossoms shot forth, and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes ; and
Pharaoh's

Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said unto him, this is the interpretation of it. The three branches are three days, yet, within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place, and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner, when thou wast his butler. But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness I pray thee unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house. For, indeed, I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into this dungeon." Alas, poor Joseph! the bitterness of adversity brought home to thy wounded heart, thy domestic fire-side, thine aged parent, thy beloved Benjamin, and thy hard hearted, envious, cruel brethren. If prosperity in the house of Potiphar had made thee forget thy father's house, adversity again brought every past endearment to recollection, and made thee, o man of God, become a suppliant to an Egyptian prisoner; but, alas! the butler forgot Joseph: no doubt he promised to requite thy kindness and thy wisdom, but affliction past—the instrument of soothing it was buried in oblivion; men live for themselves, none but the man of God liveth for society, and in the day of prosperity delights in recollecting and rewarding past obligations.

"When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and behold, I had three white baskets on my head, and in the uppermost basket there was all manner of baked meats for Pharaoh, and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head." The interpretation of good to one man, leads others to try their fortune in the same lottery, though but few prizes, yet every one hopes to be a gainer, and meets more than double disappointment from his neighbour's success, compared with his own mischance. This was the case of Pharaoh's unhappy baker, he had heard the promised restoration of the butler, and hoped to meet with a like promise. How dreadful must have been his disappointment, when Joseph said, "This is the interpretation of thy dream. The three baskets are three days, yet, within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree, and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee." Happy is that man who expecteth not worldly blessings, for he can never be disappointed. Happy, thrice happy the be-
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liever, who seeth the hand of Jehovah ordering all things, and is contented that he shall appoint his station, his support, his comforts, his trials, and the length or shortness of his journey; in every situation of life that man is at home, he is, indeed, the soldier of Christ, continually listening for the word of command.

The butler was delivered from his prison, and for two years forgot Joseph. God, as a father, chasteneth those whom he loveth, that being tried in the furnace of affliction, they may come thereout more separated and purified from self and pride, and all the base alloy that intermingles with the spirit of that man who hath not known adversity. The child of God may suffer long, but the eye of his heavenly Father is upon him, he seeth his affliction, and listeneth to all his cries, he looketh down upon him in his low estate, and will, if requisite, shake an empire to its foundation, but that he will work his deliverance. Joseph, the innocent, uncomplaining Joseph, was forgotten for two whole years, when Pharaoh dreamed two dreams, and in the morning his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof, and told them his dreams but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh. O how vain is human wisdom, with all the foolish pretensions of weak or wicked men, to the knowledge of the black art, to explain the mysterious revelations of God! He that revealeth all things that are to come to pass alone can enlighten the mind to expound that which he hath revealed; none of them could interpret the dreams unto Pharaoh. Egypt, at that time renowned for arms, for arts, for commerce, and for science, could not produce a man that could explain a dream. The monarch of the East must be troubled, and all the wisdom of the East cannot speak peace unto him. What awful attention must have ran through the court of Pharaoh, and from thence to the city, the country, and through the nation. The butler, who had long forgotten Joseph, is, by the consternation of the court, brought to remember his former comforter. "This day, said he to Pharaoh, do I remember my faults, Pharaoh was wroth with his servant, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker. And there was with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard, and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams, to each man according to his dream he did interpret; and it soon came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored

restored to mine office, and him he hanged. Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon, and he shaved, and changed his raiment and came in unto Pharaoh, and Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, it is not in me. God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." How piously doth the humbled Joseph speak; I never can read it without being humbled in my own spirit. It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace. Fit us, holy Father, for thy work, that in all we do or say, we may ascribe glory unto thee.

"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I stood upon the bank of the river, and behold there came up out of the river, seven kine, fat fleshed, and well favoured, and they fed in a meadow; and behold seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favoured, and lean fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness, and the lean and ill favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine, and when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them, but they were still ill favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke.

"And I saw in my dream, and behold, seven ears came up on one stalk, full and good; and behold seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprang up after them, and the thin ears devoured the seven good ears: and I told this unto the Egyptians, but none could declare it unto me."

And Joseph said, the dreams of Pharaoh are one; God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years: and the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them, are seven years, and the seven empty ears, blasted with the east wind, shall be seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. And there shall arise after them, seven years of famine, and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine shall consume the land, and the plenty shall not be known in the land, by reason of the famine following it, for it shall be very grievous; and for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice, it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. Now, therefore,

therefore, let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years; and let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh; and let them keep food in the cities, and that food shall be store to the land against the seven years famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land perish not through the famine: And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said, Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the spirit of God. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God has shewed thee all this, there is none so-discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be ruler over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled, only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in a vesture of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck, and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had, and they cried before him, Bow the knee, and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt: and Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."

What believer in the truth of Divine Revelation that is well acquainted with this history of Joseph, can ever be mad enough to attempt to vindicate his own character? With holy fortitude did he suffer under a false accusation: no reproaches do we hear against his false accuser; but, like the Son of God before the Jewish Sanhedrim, he answered not a word. The sudden elevation of Joseph, and the cause of it, must have occasioned much re-examination of all his past conduct, and cast a ray of divine glory over his suffering virtue. Worthy indeed was he to rule, who, by his wisdom and uprightness, could so make known his integrity of conduct, as that he stood at no time in need of exculpation. Be it my motto; be it yours; be it the motto of every Christian. God defend us! What have we to do with the approbation of mankind? Let us approve ourselves in the sight of God, and he will, in his own good time, cause us to be approved of before the eyes of mankind, then will unjust aspersions be made manifest, and the uprightness of our conduct will burst forth, like the bright shining of the sun through the misty vapour,

vapour, and the enemies who hated and reproached us shall bow the knee and do us reverence, with solemn veneration.

Pharaoh appears in the character of Creation's universal sovereign, he looks not back to all the say so's and false accusations of mankind: but he at once enters into the characters of men, and rewards Joseph according to merit; so shall it be at the coming of Christ Jesus of Nazareth, who will enter into the characters of his saints, and reward them according to merit; the sons of men shall own the justice of his appointments, and proclaim, Bow the knee before his first-born sons.

How transient are human states! Joseph, this day the beloved son of a wealthy parent, dwelling in his father's habitation and being the comfort of his heart; to-morrow behold him sold as a slave into a strange land. See him this day steward and ruler over the palace and servants of a prince; see him on the morrow unjustly accused, and cast into prison: behold him with his eye cast down, his legs fettered, and humbled to the dust, and all his thoughts mournfully reflecting upon his cruel degraded state. This hour behold him in his prison cloaths, his eye sad, his heart heavy, the ways of the footsteps of Divine Providence shadowed over with clouds and darkness: behold him the next hour blessed with the smiles of a wise and mighty monarch, adorned with all the outward decoration of human grandeur, whilst the greatest nation of the earth owns the justness of his exaltation, and listens with attention for his commands. O hope! though thou forsake the bosoms of all the rest of mankind, thy throne should be erected in the heart of the believer, for he knoweth that Jehovah ruleth, that although his paths may be in the whirlwind, and his footsteps in the great deep, yet he holdeth the reigns of government, and ordereth all the concerns of human life according to the counsel of his own will.

What a wonderful chain of circumstances attended the promotion of Joseph! Had there been but one link wanting, the whole would have been destroyed. Had not Joseph noticed the evil conduct of his brethren, they would not have hated him: If they had not hated him, he would not have been sold for a slave. If Potiphar had not purchased him, his wife would never have been smitten with his beauty; if she had not unjustly accused him, he would not have been cast into prison. If the butler and the baker had not been imprisoned, he could not have interpreted their dreams, nor Pharaoh's,
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nor have been promoted over Egypt, nor saved the lives of millions, nor would the posterity of Abraham have gone into Egypt, as Jehovah had foretold, nor would a numberless variety of the gracious promises of God been accomplished; truly, our God doth, indeed, turn the curse into a blessing, he overruled the wickedness of man, and by it saved many nations from being destroyed by famine, and, indeed, in saving the seed of Abraham, he saved the world.

“The seven years of plenty came to pass, as Joseph had foretold, and he stored up the produce of the fields in the cities which they surrounded; so wonderful was the production of nature, that he gathered corn like sand, in such prodigious quantities, that he ceased to number the amount of it. The seven years of famine followed, and dreadfully severe it was in all the countries surrounding Egypt; but in Egypt, through the providence of Joseph, there was bread, and when the stores saved by the people were expended, the people cried unto Pharaoh for bread, and Pharaoh said unto the Egyptians, go unto Joseph, and what he saith unto you do.” It is but just here to observe the beneficial effects of good government. Egypt, the granary of the world, would have been famished, had not the commerce of the people been partially restrained; had it been wholly restrained, the neighbouring nations would have been destroyed, and vast quantities of that corn which was the gift of God for the benefit of mankind at large, would have uselessly perished; but by treasuring up the exceedings of the years of plenty, and permitting the commercial industry of the people to be freely exercised with the remainder, Egypt was enriched, the nations blessed, and God glorified by his bounty to his creatures. The mass of mankind must be governed to be happy, and happy are they if their governors rule over them in the fear of the Lord.

Though the land of Canaan was, in after ages, very productive in corn, in the days of Jacob, it appears to have been chiefly pasturage. They soon, therefore, felt the effects of the famine, and Jacob said unto his sons, “Why do ye look one upon another? Behold, I have heard there is corn in Egypt, get you down thither, and buy for us from thence, that we may live and not die.” Jacob well knew the faithfulness of God, and that the promises he had made of the seed of the woman coming from his loins should, in the fullness of time, be accomplished, and yet he doth not say to his children, you are the chosen of the Lord, have but patience for

“for a little time, the windows of heaven shall be opened, and bread rained upon you sooner than you shall perish—No! the good old Patriarch well knew that although Jehovah could do any thing, yet he chooses rather to give to the diligent hand his blessing. Why do you look upon one another? Perhaps they began to despair. The fodder is gone, we have not food for our cattle, they will soon die, and we whither, shall we go? Perhaps they began to look with evil eyes upon each other; or, if it had not come to this, as yet their minds began to be humbled, they felt the dependence of their situation. Fasting will pull down the lofty thoughts of man, and for the time lay his proudest boasting in the dust; when famine comes with all its ghastly horrors, the tottering knees scarce support the skin-covered skeleton. “Why do ye look upon one another,” said the good old Jacob, “Behold I have heard that there is corn in Egypt, cheer up your spirits, my sons, if God our Creator has with-held the blessings of the earth from us, he has poured out with a liberal hand to Egypt; expect not enjoyment without labour, arise, go down to Egypt and buy corn. Why should man despair? the God of all flesh feedeth the ravens, and provideth food for man. This day another labours and we partake of his repast; to-morrow it is our turn to labour, and invite them to the meal. The God of all flesh unites society by their mutual wants, and by it giveth the greatest share of blessings to him that is most diligent in procuring them.

And the sons of Israel came into the land of Egypt to purchase corn, and Joseph was the governor of the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brethren came and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth. When Joseph said to his brethren, “behold my sheaf arose and stood upright, and behold your sheaves arose and stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.” Had he explained it by saying, Ye shall willingly come to me, rejoice in my prosperity, and with pleasure reverence my dignity, would they have believed him? Would they not have called him an aspiring fool, an abandoned liar; and swore sooner to suffer any evils than to have permitted him to rule over them, or than they would pay him any homage? Had good old Jacob said to them, My sons, you see the dreadful effects of the famine; but Egypt is a foreign country, their customs are different from ours, can you bend your minds willingly to submit to any thing the governor of it may impose? doubtless they would have

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answered

answered yes ; but had he said, Your brother Joseph is governor, you cannot buy corn there unless you homage him for your superior, would they have done it? I think not, but have answered, we will starve first, we will not go down. This is the true spirit of the Jews ; they will sooner suffer the bitterest deaths rather than acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah. Upon the Continent many have chose whipping rather than to pronounce the name of Jesus, although it is a common name amongst them, signifying Saviour, or Restorer, and when they have been at last forced to pronounce it, they have spit after it, to shew their abhorrence of the name. There is not any thing in heaven, earth, or hell, they so much hate as the name of Jesus of Nazareth. So did the brethren of Joseph hate him. Was he not innocent, did he not love them? Yes! but he reprov'd them. Tell a falsehood of a bad man and he may forgive you, but tell of his evil deeds and you forfeit his esteem for ever ; all men curse the liar, and yet not any who know not God love the truth—They love to hear the truth of their neighbours, but themselves they love to deceive, and hope by it to deceive others. This was the case with the Jewish nation, our Lord testified before his Father, and before the nation, that the deeds of his brethren were evil ; this occasioned their hatred towards the Son of God, and made them unintentionally fulfill the prophecy concerning him, that he should be a man whom the nation despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But as his visage was marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men, so shall he sprinkle many nations : the kings shall shut their mouths at him, for that which has not been told them shall they see ; and that which they had not heard shall they consider. Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his holy one, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful. I have proposed this question, has there ever been any man whom the Jewish nation abhorreth but Jesus of Nazareth? I know of no one, not even of all their wicked kings and false prophets, although one of them cost them the lives of 580,000 men, and, indeed, almost destroyed the name of the Jewish nation ; so that it might be said, that from his time began their despair of ever regaining their own land ; yet his name is never mentioned with that contempt which they affix to the name of Jesus : and yet Jesus
never

never destroyed them, but he healed the sick and wrought numerous miracles in their favour, and to this day they do not attempt to deny it.

Joseph's brethren never thought to ask any favour of him, his name they detested, and delivered his person into the hands of strangers: but God knew how to make them bow the knee before him. He sent famine amongst them. Wonderful the effects of famine! the strength faileth, and the soul becomes depressed; bread we must have, or our life is gone. This shall be one of the great means in the hands of God, to keep in subjection the nations to Jesus, during his millennial reign: no rain shall come upon all the nations of the earth who send not their annual deputies with homage and tribute to Jerusalem—no rain, no corn, the earth will not yield her fruits, famine ensues, and awful desolation shall humble the haughty spirit of man.

God knew how to break the staff of bread among the Egyptians, though fertilised by the Nile, as well as in the land of Canaan, which depended upon the showers from heaven. The Egyptians cry to Pharaoh for food. "Go to Joseph," said he. So now, when the sons of men are in distress, and cry to God, the Universal Parent. "Go to Jesus," saith he, "look unto him ye children of distress." All ye remote peoples of the earth looked unto him and be saved. Every knee will he make to bow in homage, and every tongue swear allegiance to the name of Jesus. Nothing can be more disagreeable to his enemies than the thoughts of this; but Jehovah hath sworn, and shall he not accomplish? Every knee, whether Jew or Gentile, shall be constrained to reverence him whom the Creator delighteth to honour, and every tongue shall confess his goodness to the glory of God the Father.

"And Joseph saw his brethren and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spoke roughly unto them. Whence come ye? And they said from the land of Canaan to buy food: but he said unto them, ye are spies, to see the nakedness of the land ye are come." Doubtless they thought this mighty man of Egypt a strange fellow, and had many lofty thoughts at the personal affront he put upon them: had we come to beg his corn, he might have been so rough and imperious; but when we come as customers to purchase it, he might have been more civil: but they were hungry, and famine humbled their language; they wanted food, and

it would not do to speak rashly to him, who alone could supply their wants. Happy the man who is so humbled as to be enabled to manage his tongue; happier still, if the thoughts of his heart are brought into subjection.

"You are strangers," said Joseph, you are spies, you are come down from the land of Canaan to spy out the barrenness of our country;" and they said unto him, "Nay, my Lord, but to buy food are thy servants come, we are all one man's sons, we are true men, thy servants are no spies: and he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land are ye come. And they said, thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not. And Joseph said unto them, That is it I spake unto you, saying ye are spies. Hereby ye shall be proved: by the life of Pharaoh, ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you, or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely ye are spies. And he put them all together into ward three days."

By all this, who would not suppose that Joseph had not some spite against his brethren, and was fully resolved to revenge himself upon them for their former cruelty? On the third day he seemed to relent, and sent for them again, and said to them, "This do and live; I will not entirely starve you, for I fear God. If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses: but bring your youngest brother unto me, so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die."

How wisely did Joseph work upon their passions, so as to bring home their former crime to their minds, and cause them to stand self-condemned. There is no need for an accuser when God, by his providential dealings, bringeth a man to the knowledge of himself; guilt and its attendant horrors, then harrow up the soul, and every thought accuses and condemns. The man sitteth in judgment upon his past life, and awfully severe is the sentence that he passes. "And they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear, therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, do not sin against the child: and ye would not

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not hear. Therefore behold also his blood is required. And they knew not that Joseph understood them, for he spoke unto them by an interpreter."

Thus God acts by man ; he does not speak immediately, but by his providences, and bringeth man to the recollection of his guilt, and to the open confession of it, crying out with the publican, Lord, have mercy upon me a sinner. Joseph had now brought his brethren to the acknowledgment of their guilt, he carries on the scene till they by mutual re-erimination make known to him who is the most guilty. Little did they think of the feelings of Joseph ; he was touched with their infirmities, he saw the evil of their nature, and was determined to work in them a radical cure. Judgment was his strange work ; it forced him to turn himself about and weep. He then returned to them again, communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

"Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way. They had not got far upon their journey, when opening his sack to give his ass provender, one of them found his money : and he said unto his brethren, my money is restored, and lo ! it is even in my sack, and their hearts failed, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us ?" Dreadfully frightened indeed, to go down into Egypt to buy corn, and there to be taken for spies, to pay for that corn, and find their money in their sacks, and perhaps to be pursued and taken up for thieves, or when their brother returned with them to be all seized, and either put to death or sold for slaves.

Arrived at home, they acquainted their father with the rough treatment they had received from the Lord of Egypt, "He took us for spies, and would have that we came to search out the barrenness of the country. It was in vain we denied it ; in vain we declared our integrity, relating to him all our family circumstances ; he imprisoned us, and when he set us free, he retained Simeon in custody, until we should bring our youngest brother, Benjamin, down to confirm, by his appearance, the truth of our statement, and then he would deliver Simeon to us again, and permit us to traffic in the land." They then opened their sacks, and to their great astonishment, every man's money was found in his sack ; fear and horror seized them, Simeon, a prisoner, and by some

some unaccountable circumstances, all the money which they had paid for their corn returned. Doubtless they thought the Lord of Egypt will only know the money was not paid, he will not be acquainted with our integrity, we shall be supposed to be crafty knaves, Simeon will be ill treated, and when we return for corn, we shall be punished for villainy.

Their aged parent sees their distress, but parental tenderness for his absent child is only increased by their affliction. "Me have ye bereaved; you have lopped off the branches from my withered trunk. Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and will ye take Benjamin away? All these things are against me." Poor old man! all thy fair expectations appear to be blasted, the storm seemed to pelt thy once happy habitation, thy decayed body seemed to have all its props taking away, and to be about to sink into the grave, deserted, comfortless and alone. When that which is our present pride is cut off, and all our future hope withered, what is man?

"And Reuben spake unto his father, slay my two sons if I bring him not to thee; deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him unto thee again." Poor consolation this to the good old man, to be permitted to slay his grand children because he had lost his child. Educated in the tempest, hardened by the inclemency of the weather, Reuben's soul seems to have possessed but little of the tender affections; guided by the impulse of the moment, he appears to have been equally ready to do good or evil. All alive to the voice of misery, his utmost desire was to relieve it by any means, just or unjust; equally alive to the impulse of his passions, his utmost desire was to gratify them; in the ways of virtue unstable as water; he never excelled. The man whose principles are not firmly established upon the conduct of God, he who is not guided by motives superior to the feelings of the flesh, will never attain any great height of virtue: his brightest actions will be like the dazzling lightning which astonishes and destroys, whilst his common walk of life is grovelling, if not injurious.

"The famine was sore in the land, the corn they had brought from Egypt was expended, they began to feel the want of bread, and their father said unto them, go again, buy us a little food: but Judah said, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food; but if thou wilt not send him we will not go down, for the man said

said unto us, ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you. And Israel said, wherefore dealt ye so ill with me as to tell the man ye had a brother? And they said the man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive, have ye another brother? and we answered him accordingly: Could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down? And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and thou, and also our little ones: I will be surety for him, of my hand shalt thou require him. If I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever. For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time."

How rational, manly and persuasive is the speech of Judah! it had the desired effect, and the good affectionate old man said, "If it must be so now, do this, take advice, soften the roughness of the Lord of Egypt with a present, do him homage, make an acknowledgment of his superiority, and gain his favour by shewing your dependence upon him. Take of the best fruits of the land in your vessels, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, myrrh, nuts and almonds, and take double money in your hand, and the money that was brought again in the mouths of your sacks, carry it again in your hand, peradventure it was an oversight. Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man, and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

What strange ideas had the good old Patriarch of his best earthly friend! Little did he think that the man whose temper he sought to mollify was at that time taking much pains to make him a joyful parent of virtuous children; that his hoary hairs might descend to the grave crowned with joy and full of peace. Just such ideas have the children of men of their best friend, Jesus the Saviour. They behold his rough treatment of them in all the cross scenes of providence, but they behold not his kind compassion, and the tender sympathy of his heart; in their highest sufferings he renders them less than they deserve, and then only afflicts that he may humble the proud imagination of their heart, and subdue every lofty thought into obedience to his will.

Well, down to Egypt they again go, and once more stand with Benjamin their brother before Joseph, who bids his
house

house steward kill and make ready that they may dine with him. " And he brought Simeon out unto them, and brought them into Joseph's house, and gave them water to wash their feet; and he gave their asses provender: and when Joseph came home they brought the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him unto the earth. And he asked of their welfare, and said, " Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive? And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health; he is yet alive, and they bowed down their heads and made obeisance. And he lift up his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother of whom ye spake unto me; and he said, God be gracious unto thee my son. And Joseph made haste, for his bowels yearned upon his brother, and he sought where to weep, and he entered into his chamber and wept there. And he washed his face, and went out and refrained himself, and said set on bread."

There is something peculiarly beautiful in this part of the history of Joseph, it shews his character in a most affecting and amiable point of light. Neither adversity or prosperity had destroyed his fraternal love; his whole soul melted over his brother, prudence not permitting him to pour forth his affections till he had tried if his brethren loved Benjamin, and if affliction had brought them to that union that is so desirable in a family. The man who has not social affection may talk of the tenderness of his heart, but his actions give the lie to his words, and cause him to stand condemned from his own lips. Whenever I see a family of children united in love to each other, always anxious to manifest it by kind actions and mutual forbearance, should they have many and great failings, yet I am confident that I then behold a family who have strong stamina of virtue, which if called forth, would make them ornaments to society, a glory to their Maker, a mutual support to each other; such a family might put fortune's roughest frowns at defiance, and smile amidst the scorn, reproach and contempt of mankind.

Dinner time came, and Joseph arranged them all according to their ages, the eldest first and the youngest last; and the men wondered and were astonished, they could not account for it. It was all enchanted ground! He then sent messes to each of them, but to Benjamin a mess of honour, five times as much as the rest, being determined to call forth all the envy of their hearts if any was left, and they drank and

and were merry with him. And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, "Fill the mens sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth, and put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money." And he did according as Joseph had spoken, and when the morning was light the men were sent away, they and their asses.

Doubtless they went merrily on, anticipating the pleasures of home and the joys of their father's heart at the sight of his beloved Benjamin. The good treatment they had experienced, so contrary to what they expected, must have given them a more than common elevation of spirit.—When on a sudden Joseph's steward overtakes them and says, "Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good, has not my lord treated you as friends, has he not returned you the money which you brought to purchase corn; are you still so covetous as to steal his silver cup, out of which he divineth? And they said unto him, wherefore saith my Lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing. Behold, the money which we found in our sacks mouths we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan; how then should we steal out of thy Lord's house silver or gold; with whomsoever of thy servants it is found let him die, and we will be my Lord's bondsmen. And he said, now let it be according to your words, he with whom it is found shall be my servant, and ye shall be blameless. Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. And he searched, and he began at the eldest and he left off at the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they rent their cloathes and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city."

"And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house (for he was yet there) and they fell before him on the ground. Joseph addressed them roughly. What deed is this that you have done? Did you not suppose that a man like me could certainly divine? But Judah modestly, yet boldly comes forward and said, what shall we say unto my Lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants, behold we are my Lord's servants, both we and he also with whom the cup is found.—God forbid (cries Joseph) that I should do so, the man in whose hand the cup is found he shall be my servant, and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father."

Judah again came forward and makes an oration, which for beauty, simplicity, and pathos, is one of the most excellent of

any recorded in any history sacred or prophane. "O my Lord ! let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my Lord's ear, and let not thine anger burn against thy servants, for thou art even as Pharaoh. My Lord asked his servants, saying, have ye a father, or a brother ? and we said unto my Lord, we have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one, and his brother is dead and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidest unto thy servants, bring him down unto me that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my Lord, the lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father his father would die. And thou saidest unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, you shall see my face no more. And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant, my father, we told him the words of my Lord. And my father said, go again and buy us a little food ; and we said, we cannot go down, if our youngest brother be not with us ; and thy servant, my father, said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons, and the one went out from me, and I said, surely he is torn in pieces, and I saw him not since ; and if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now, therefore, when I come to thy servant, my father and the lad be not with us, seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life, it shall come to pass, when he seeth the lad is not with us, that he will die, and thy servants shall bring down the grey hairs of thy servant our father, with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now, therefore, I pray thee let thy servant abide instead of the lad, a bondsman unto my Lord, and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go to my father and the lad be not with me ; lest peradventure, I shall see the evil that shall come upon my father."

A discourse so impressive, so full of filial piety, came home to every tender feeling of Joseph's heart ; his end was answered, he saw that his brethren loved their brother, that all the envy that rankles in the bosoms of a divided family was destroyed. Benjamin was supposed to be guilty of theft, yet instead of upbraiding they acknowledge his guilt, and offer their own lives or liberties to redeem his. This was what Joseph wanted to know, to search their hearts and call forth every root of bitterness that might be concealed, that every separate interest arising from their having different mothers might be destroyed, so that he might be enabled to return them unto his aged parent

rent clothed in meekness, gentleness, and warm fraternal love.

Joseph loved his father, the speech of Judah blew upon the filial flame, it shewed him his affectionate aged parent still mourning over his absent child, he could no longer refrain, he caused all the attendants to go out from him, he wept aloud, and said, " I am Joseph ; doth my father yet live ? and his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near unto me I pray you, and they came near ; and he said, I am Joseph your brother whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that you sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life."

Much instruction is contained in this account of Joseph ; the believer can but infer if God could act by such intricate providence, to bring the brethren of Joseph to bow down unto him ; cannot he act by the same mysterious chain of providential circumstances to bring the Jewish nation, the brethren of Jesus, to be troubled at the presence of Jesus, to be astonished at their ingratitude to him, and to bow unto him with a voluntary subjection and pay full homage to his sceptre. If such an intricate plot as this could be laid with so much wisdom, and carried on with such firm resolution by a man-like ourselves ; say cannot the true Joseph, him who constituted the ages, cannot he lay down such a plan and cause it to take place as shall bring his brethren after the flesh to bow down unto him. How are ye slow of heart to believe all that God hath spoken by his servants of old concerning Jesus the Messiah, whose name is exalted high above every name in heaven and on earth, that he may accomplish the glorious plan of restoration which the immortal Father hath contrived for all his creatures. What an astonishing scene will that be, when the present midnight shades of mental darkness shall disappear at the brightness of the splendor of Jesus of Nazareth, when he cometh in all the glory of his Father, attended by the innumerable host of first born saints and holy angels.

When Christ first came, his brethren knew him not ; they saw him only as the son of the Carpenter. In like manner, when the brethren of Joseph went down into Egypt, they knew not Joseph, they saw in him the Lord of Egypt, but they beheld not in him their brother, all was dark and wonderful, they were astonished other strangers should be permitted to buy corn, but that they should be accounted as spies, that he should permit them to carry corn home with

them to their families, and yet detain Simeon from them. So when Jesus came he healed their sick and supplied their wants, but concealed himself, they saw not in his person the glories of the Messiah, they discovered not in him the pomp, the splendor, or outward dignity of the seed of David, the ruler of the world, and in consequence thereof they rejected him. Therefore, because they rejected in the person of Christ the counsel of God against themselves, they have been now for many ages past, scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth, the scorn, the reproach and contempt of mankind. Still they remain the brethren of Jesus—all their ingratitude and blasphemous reproaches have not destroyed his fraternal affection for them—he hath brought them into great distresses and will continue to bring them into greater; nothing they have ever yet suffered is to be compared with what remains for them to suffer, as appears by comparing the prophecies of Ezekiel with those of Zechariah. Then at the moment of their distress shall the Lord even Jesus appear as their Saviour. O then how will their hearts be troubled when he shall say I am Jesus, Jesus whom you mocked, ridiculed, spit upon, reproached! Jesus whom ye crucified, whose name you have held in abhorrence, whose love you have neglected and despised! Astonishment and weeping shall take hold of them—no wonder when memory recalls all their past ingratitude, when recollection causes all their folly and all their crimes to appear before them; no wonder that overpowered with shame and deep contrition, every family and every individual shall seek the inmost retirement to pour forth their supplications to that brother whom they have despised and rejected, no longer shall they refuse to pay obedience unto him.

Judah could make a fine oration, but when he knew it was Joseph whom he had addressed, he could speak no more. So shall it be with the Jewish nation in that day, when they shall look upon him whom they have pierced and mourn. No more will they attempt to plead their own innocence, and indirectly cast the blame upon him with a "thou saidst unto thy servants," but consciousness of guilt and heartfelt contrition will utterly silence every defence, with Lord be merciful to me a sinner.

Every punishment God inflicts is full of love, all is intended to subdue and humble, that the rebel may know his own heart, and feel the plague of it that he may be healed. Great is the malignity of sin, it is of a hardening nature, it groweth upon the habits till it contaminates the soul of man. It becomes requisite

quisite to man that he should suffer that he may cease from sin, and the same afflictions which tend to humble the pride of the human heart, tend to subdue at the same time the whole soul of the sinner into perfect obedience to the sceptre of Jesus. Joseph appears to have had as little of envy, guile, pride, and revenge in his composition as any man whatever; his soul on the contrary, seems to have been formed for love and friendship, yet he found it necessary to pursue for some time this rough mysterious treatment of his brethren; he knew that envy, hatred and malice had guided their actions, and that such passions were contrary to brotherly love, to domestic felicity, to virtue, to present enjoyment and to future glory; his fraternal affection and his wisdom led him, therefore, to the exercise of his power, that he might correct every evil principle that must otherwise have been a bar to their happiness; he longed for them to be in such a state that he might mingle his soul with theirs, and have mutual flux and reflux of pure uncontaminated fraternal love from the heart. Thus it is with Christ and his brethren the Jewish nation: therefore, it was under his direction that Jerusalem was surrounded by the Romans, he saw the wives of his brethren kill and eat their own offspring; it was under his inspection that the walls of his beloved city was surrounded by the bodies of his crucified brethren, and greater miseries than these by his appointment shall take place. Yet he loved them, he wept over them, he died for them, his heart is not changed, he still compassionates their distresses whilst he inflicts them. It is therefore from his love that they spring—the hardness of their hearts needeth such severe afflictions to soften and subdue them; all the kind acts that he could possibly have exhibited, would never make them submit, but when they are come through their own guilt and folly to their worst estate, and as a nation are about to be destroyed, his shewing himself in the air as their Saviour, and bringing them a full deliverance, appearing in all the glory of his Father, attended by angelic hosts with the first born sons of God, exhibiting his hands and feet and side pierced and wounded for them. this shall indeed overpower the stubbornness of their hearts, and bring them with contrite hearts joyfully to submit themselves unto him, and if the Jewish nation who have hitherto resisted every offer of mercy, can be brought to a voluntary submission to the Son of God, I have no hesitation upon my mind concerning the full salvation of the Gentiles.

Our Lord says, if the mighty works which he wrought in Canaan, had been wrought amongst the heathen in Sodom, Gomorrah,

Gomorrhah, or Nineveh, they would have long since repented in sackcloth and ashes. If Jesus, therefore, knew how to bring down the stubbornness of their hearts, how easily can he subdue the hearts of all mankind. If he will be gracious to that stubborn hardened nation, will he not have mercy upon all and pour forth a spirit of prayer and supplication upon all; but Christians are fond of saying all, all, inviting all, intreating all, and promising all, and yet by all meaning only a small, puny, pitiful, little petty circle, and not like the scriptural, a circle enclosing within it the vast circumference of creation. The goodness, justice, and mercy of God must all harmonize together, then every attribute of Jehovah will shine in perfect splendor and none of his attributes eclipse each other. In the means to and final accomplishment of the full restoration of all the creatures of God, none can shew which is the greatest, his wisdom, his power, or his love, but all are equal for in all he is infinite.

Let me recommend to your further and more leisurely consideration the character of Joseph, who is the greatest of all the scriptures types of Christ Jesus, excepting Moses—but Joseph answers to the character of Jesus in fifty instances.

Now unto the king, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory to the age of ages. Amen!

S E R M O N VII.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

HOSEA XIII. 14.

I will ransom them from the power of the grave : I will redeem them from death : O death ! I will be thy plagues ; O grave ! I will be thy destruction ; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

IT will be necessary rightly to understand these words, to consider them in connection with the whole of the prophecy. God was speaking of a rebellious people that he was determined to destroy ; notwithstanding all his invitations and promises, exhortations, and threatenings, they still continued rebellious ; hardening themselves in iniquity. " They sin," saith God, " More and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols, according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsman ; they say of them, let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves." It was from the iniquity of the Israelites, that the anger of Jehovah was kindled ; they having resisted his offers of mercy, he begins to increase the severity of his threatenings, and tells them, " They shall be as the morning dew, that passeth away ; as the chaff, that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor ; and as the smoke out of the chimney."

Jehovah had long been gracious unto them, he had given fertility to their fields, he had blessed the labour of their hands ; traffic had increased their merchandize, the hand of his Providence had poured plenty into their lap, they enjoyed his beneficence, and " According to their pasture, so were they filled ;
they

they were filled; and their heart was exalted : "Therefore" saith Jehovah, "have they forgotten me." Awful consideration ! the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib ; but Israel did not know the hand that liberally supplied all his wants. The sons of men scarce ever consider from whence their blessings are derived. They get exalted, and their hearts are lifted up, and God their maker is disregarded.

God will be known amongst his people, his name shall be exalted amongst all the nations ; if his goodness leadeth them not to repentance, his afflictive dispensations, shall manifest his power ; the stubbornness of all the enemies of Jehovah shall be subdued ; they shall behold his love and kiss the rod that smote them ; for they shall be smitten according to the hardness of their impenitent hearts : for they treasure up unto themselves wrath, against the day of wrath. Thus did Ephraim of old ; it was the iniquity of Ephraim, that occasioned the denunciation of the awful judgments that Jehovah by his Prophet, denounces against them. It was this that as it were, forced the God of love to say, " I will be unto them like a lion ; as a leopard " by the way, I will observe them, I will meet them as a bear " bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart ; " there will I devour them like a lion, the wild beast shall tear " them." What language can more fully speak sentiments of revenge ; love unreturned, breaking forth like a fire. It seems as though Jehovah, having now exhausted all his patience, was determined to sweep them entirely away with the besom of destruction. But immediately after this awful denunciation of vengeance, mercy comes flowing in, in a strong and overflowing tide. " O Israel ! thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help." Astonishing thought ! it explains the whole cause of the evil that befall mankind. Thou hast destroyed thyself, no fatal decree, no absolute necessity for men or nations to sin and ruin themselves ; No ! it is their own free choice ; happiness is before them if they will but seek the good of others, if they will but trace out the revealed conduct of God, and imitate it. But they seek their own advantage, their own glory. In their public and private conduct, even in their solemn adoration of Deity, they will pursue their own vain imaginations, and not the laws of their Maker. They corrupt their understandings, their doctrines, their worship, their practice ; they destroy themselves. The least deviation from truth, is a deviation from wisdom and from happiness, and must increase till misery and destruction ensue, unless the arm of Jehovah turn the overwhelming tide with the rock

rock of affliction. The Jews of old deviated from the worship appointed by God; and they deviated not out of contempt, but that they might honour him: they had his word, but studied it not. It was thus that Micah made the molten image, and appointed a Levite to be the priest of Jehovah; and thus onward they went, by little and little, adding to, or diminishing from his law, till gradually they fell into gross idolatry, and all its abominations. In like manner the church of Christ thought to honour God by adorning the simplicity of his worship with Jewish ceremonies; till, at last, they erected the throne of antichrist in the temple of Jehovah; whilst error, superstition, and abomination rivetted the oppressive chains of persecution, substituting sound for sense, shew for religion, ignorance for wisdom, till they had totally destroyed the purity and simplicity of divine truth. Happy indeed is it for the church of God, that though they destroy themselves, in him is their help.

"I will be thy king," saith Jehovah to Ephraim. "Where is any other that can save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges, of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? I gave thee a king in my anger, and took him away in my wrath." Jehovah here represents himself by way of contrast, gratifying the desires of his people in giving them a king—one chosen from amongst those whom he appointed as judges and saviours to his people, under himself the Great Judge and Saviour. These kings had ruined them by their folly, ignorance, pride, and ambition; he promises to re-assume his ancient title of King of Israel—"I will be thy king;" and, by the exercise of his sovereignty, to restore his destroyed people to more than their ancient glory. He does not say, that he will wait till they call upon him to retake his throne; but he declares, that they shall eat the fruits of their own self-dependence; and that, when they have sufficiently suffered, for ever to cease from their sin, "I will," saith he, "be thy help; I will come unto thee in the hour of extremity, manifest my loving kindness, and help and save thee, O Ephraim! I will not, as I have done before, give thee a king in my anger, because of thy pride and self-dependence, and take him away in my wrath because of his rebellion against me; but I will pity thine afflictions; in mercy I will send thee a deliverer; one who shall not rebel against my will; one who shall promote my glory amongst the sons of men; my loving-kindness shall establish his throne; and to him shall the nations of the earth pay their tribute."

“ The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up, his sin is hid. The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children.” Here God declares, that, in consequence of his folly, death shall be the portion of Ephraim. His iniquity is bound up---As a bag of money, according to the custom of the East, was bound up when its sum was completed, so was the iniquity of Ephraim; his sin was hid; his punishment ensued: the sorrows of a travailing woman should come upon him: famine, sword, captivity, and pestilence, with all their horrors, should come upon him, because he would not submit to the divine dispensations; he would not bend his neck to the yoke of divine government.

In the midst of these awful denunciations of judgment comes in the words of my text---“ I will ransom them from the power of the grave.” It is easy, by comparing the word here rendered *grave*, to prove that God, by his prophet, did not mean to say, that he would snatch them from the destruction he had threatened; but, on the contrary, that they should suffer, be swept off by death, and cast into hell, the place of punishment, and afterwards be redeemed from it; for the same word occurs Psalm ix. 18. “ For the wicked shall be turned into *hell*, and all the nations that forget God;” as likewise in many other places: the word, therefore means the receptacle for departed spirits: and, as Ephraim was to be cut off for his sins, he was to go to hell to be punished for them, yet even there does the promise reach. “ I will ransom them from the power of hell;” the *hand of hell*; which shall, as it were, be closed upon them to hold them fast; I will open it; I will ransom, I will deliver them.

We see, therefore, that it was in consequence of the folly of Ephraim that he was condemned to death. He was an unwise son. Alas! his heavenly father had instructed him in wisdom, but he rejected the counsel of God; he would walk after his own vain imagination: he was indeed unwise, for he sought for wisdom in his own headstrong will; in doing what he thought right in his own eyes. And may not this be the case with some of you? In so large a congregation it is not improbable but that there must be some unwise, headstrong children; self-willed, lovers of themselves; men and women who have destroyed themselves. Before I had my present views of the love of God, I could not behold a large congregation with my present feelings. I could but think on the many present
who

who were called to be partakers of future glory, and how very few amongst the number would become chosen to that happy situation. My soul was harrowed up with the horrid idea of a dreadful eternity of misery, sorrow ever new, and anguish, pains, and groans for ever young. According to the views I then had, I was more disposed to weep over them than invite them to believe: I considered the multitude of them as doomed by the unfrustrable will of eternal fate to never ending misery. And the joys that arose at the repentance of a few, were not equal to the sorrows of my heart for the endless sufferings of the many: the weight of the awful consideration was by far more than a balance to all popular applause: I trembled at the praises of sinners, who might, as I thought, be doomed to such everlasting misery.

"I will redeem them from death." This cannot but imply that Ephraim must die; that redemption should not take place upon them in this life. "I will redeem them from death:" they must then be under the power of death, or they could not be redeemed from it. Ephraim had sinned grievously; and the fruit of sin is death, as naturally as that when a woman hath conceived, she in due time bringeth forth her offspring. So when sin is conceived in the heart, it goeth on to outward action, till the fruit, being fully ripe, it bringeth forth death. This awful consideration is seldom in the heart of the sinner; when he is rolling the delicious morsel of iniquity beneath his tongue, and crieth out "How sweet is it!" Little doth he then think of the bitterness, the woe, the misery that will ensue. The taste may be pleasant on the palate, but how bitter is the digestion of it. The eyes of the drunkard sparkle with joy when he beholdeth that the wine is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright in the glass; his heart panteth with delight when he vieweth the sparkling glass; he seizeth it with rapture, and with his whole soul pursueth the festive scene. But death is in the cup; his eyes are inflamed with fire; his spirits are elated without cause; he feels superior dignity in his nature; his understanding is darkened; his apprehension is gone; he taketh offence where none was given; his dignity is wounded: he findeth that the pleasing poison biteth like a serpent: he hath woe, he hath sorrow: his spirit is contentious, and his tongue talkative: he gets quarrelsome, and hath wounds without cause. He forgetteth the end of his manhood; perhaps the wife of his bosom is forgotten: he beholdeth a strange woman; he longeth for her embraces, and his heart uttereth perverse things: his

corporeal faculties are weakened ; he rocketh about like the waves of the ocean ; he is unsteady, like the vessel that floateth upon its billows : his faculties are overpowered ; and although by himself he complaineth of being beaten, he waketh from the fumes of the wine, and is covered with aches and bruises ; whilst the seved blood beats the aching temples in its impetuous course. It is not drunkenness alone that bringeth its punishment with it. No ; every vice is followed by punishment ; and every rational man cannot but discern the hand of Jehovah in causing every perversion of his gifts to be attended with pain.

I made choice of this vice to illustrate my subject, because some suppose it to be of so trivial a nature, that God will not regard it. They say, If it is a sin, it is only a sin against themselves ; but if they trace out its pernicious consequences, they must find that it extends its baneful influence from themselves to all around them, and renders every one dependent on them miserable : it destroys the understanding, and renders the governing image of God less than a beast. To his cost every one who delighteth habitually to put the bottle to his mouth, and is mighty to drink strong drink, shall know, that, by his habitual drunkenness, he hath shut the gates of the millennial kingdom against himself : he shall tremble and be astonished when he findeth that his name is enrolled with the fornicator, adulterer, and murderer. If this sin is so severely threatened in the Scriptures of truth, what shall we say of the profane swearer ! The drunkard may perhaps plead the fever of his body which maketh him to crave the liquor to quench his thirst ; he may persuade himself that his health requires it ; and if he is overtaken by drunkenness, it was unintentional ; but the swearer, the man who lightly taketh the name of his Maker within his polluted lips, or dares madly to wish curses upon his fellow-creatures, stands without excuse. No temptation whatever has he to plead as an alleviation of his guilt. If he believes there is no God, or no future punishment, he cannot but be considered as a fool for using words without meaning ; and if he believes that there is a God, his bold, blasphemous impertinence must merit the severest punishment at his hands in the day that he cometh to punish the ungodly, and them who know him not. The common swearer is guilty of a crime that Satan and his fallen host would tremble at : bad as they are, there is not a devil that would execrate himself---not one amongst those impure spirits that would call down damnation on his own head. No ! they expect the awful prison

prison of hell with solemn horror; they tremble at the name of Jesus; they dread the day when he shall sit in judgment upon them; and amongst all their millions there is not one that invokes upon his head the vengeance of the living God. ---O man, thou hast espied the iniquity of the infernal host, and thou consignest them, without pity, to unceasing torments, yet darest to expect pardon thyself, even when thou sinnest far more than the unhappy instruments who seduced thee from thy allegiance! Where is the man that would continually mock the name of an earthly monarch in his presence? Where is the man that would be so ungrateful as continually to ridicule his benefactor? If such instances cannot be produced, every reflecting mind cannot but pronounce the common swearer to be the maddest and most ungrateful of human beings: he mocketh the sovereign Monarch of all nature, and turns into ridicule his Creator, Preserver, and daily bountiful Benefactor.

Numerous, indeed, awfully so, are the iniquities that will consign men to the second death; all liars shall have a part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; none shall enter into the holy city that loveth or maketh a lie. It is a solemn thought, when we come to consider how this vice intermingles itself with all the concerns of mankind. Behold the statesman, the nobleman, the gentleman, the merchant, the tradesman, the mechanic, high and low, rich and poor, each and all have their respective lies of business, of politeness, and of folly: no station seemeth free from it; it seems to have become a part of education; esteemed necessary, even by men calling themselves Christians, to lie with a good grace; and whilst they are ready to murder the man who chargeth them with the crime, they feel no compunction of heart if it is not found out: and if they have sufficient impudence to avow their wickedness, they boast of it as their glory. I dare not say that some lies possess not less guilt than others; but this I dare say, that no one who loveth or maketh a lie shall have a part in the holy city. Christian, dare to reflect before you speak. Better indeed would it be to suffer death than to speak falsehood, and lose an habitation in the New Jerusalem, in the city of the living God, which cometh down from heaven. God is truth, but the liar is untruth; he is therefore diametrically opposite to God. One is light, and courts the closest examination; the other is darkness, and avoids it. How then can light and darkness have fellowship with each other? It is true, they are more or less heinous as they affect the liar or the society to which he belongs,

belongs, or the world at large. Some lies involve men in quarrels, malice, and death; others disturb the peace of families; others set the world in arms, and cover the field of battle with groans and blood and horror, whilst desolated nations mourn over their destruction; others are for the sake of filthy lucre; they are dictated by self-love, and keep up the jealousy, the suspicion, the mistrust of mankind; others spring from pride of heart; and, to prevent the condemnation of man, men foolishly dare the condemnation of God; others spring from the love of laughter; and the merry soul awfully weighs his spiritual inheritance against a joke? Alas! alas! who shall trace out the falsehoods of the human heart and human tongue! The guilt of them all must be according to the malice of the offender, and the extent of the consequences. But when we consider the dangers to which men are exposed by habit, by inclination, by occupation, and by their passions, we cannot but observe the wisdom of that saying of the apostle James; "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." Almighty Father, give us more holy resolution that we may at all times speak the truth; what we would wish thee to hear, what we may not repent of when we shall be called to appear before thee to give an account of the deeds done in the body.

Despising the gospel and rejecting the offers of pardon made unto man by Christ Jesus our Lord is another crime that shall incur the penalty of the second death. When men who have received the gospel can become so hardened in unbelief as to trample under foot the son of God, and to account the blood of the covenant wherewith they were cleansed an unholy thing, it is not to be wondered at that such characters must meet with severe punishment. They are sick unto death, and yet the only remedy that can restore them to health they reject: they must suffer the pains that their mental disease occasions, till such time as that they feel and tremble with horror at its awful pangs, and gladly take hold by faith of that remedy which the merciful compassion of their heavenly Father provideth for their disease. If a man will despise the faithful instruction given him in the sacred word, there is a great danger of that man's sinning unto death; for if they who despised the law of Moses, died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment must that man be thought worthy who rejects the son of God, and tramples upon the mercies of divine goodness; who, when God hath made known his love by the gift of his son, and he, having believed the divine report, brought forth —

forth fruit unto life, and, through faith, tasted, by that hope which faileth not, of the power of the age to come, having, even in this mortal state, realized by faith the glories of the kingdom of the Messiah; if such a one turns back into the kingdom of Satan, through the terror of man, or the powerful effects of filthy lucre, the impulse of his passions, or any other overcoming evil, there remaineth for him no more sacrifice for sin; he hath rejected the pardon freely bestowed upon him by his sovereign; he hath treated his favours with contempt: he hath rebelled against his Maker, his Redeemer, his Benefactor, and his Sovereign: he must suffer the penalty due to his crime; the second death and all its infernal horrors awaits him; hell is now heating for him---for him, and for every wilful transgressor shall the cloud capped mountains, the mighty concave of this hollow globe, with all the beauties of art and nature be dissolved into one unconfined deluge of burning lava, the awful lake that burneth with fire and brimstone throughout the age of ages, which is the second death.

All unrepented sin leads down to death. Awful thought! ---All sin is a deviation from truth; every individual deviation leads the mind of the deviator into darkness; and, through the shades that cover his path, he makes another false step, and from that another, till at last he stumbles on the gates of hell and death. Thus David sinned when he deviated from that firmness with which he ought to have held the reins of his government, when he omitted to punish Joab for the murder of Abner. As the representative of Jehovah the king of Israel, he ought not to have said, "Ye sons of Zeruiah are too hard for me," but to have enforced the law, and caused the murderer to be put to death, that the land might not become polluted with blood: but David from fear deviated from his duty. And alas! who is there amongst us, that, in the same situation, might not have done the same? But when we see the upholding hand of Jehovah, and the awful consequences of disobedience, we may have our integrity preserved. To this one weak step of David may be attributed the future daring ambition of Joab, the incest of Amon, the fratricide and impiety of Absalom, and all those troubles that shook the throne of David to its centre, and filled his house with adultery, with rebellion, and with death. Repent then, of all your sins; think over frequently your past transactions; weigh them in the balance of the sanctuary, and greatly dare, in all your actions, to manifest yourselves the disciples of the son of God, and press forward after a crown that fadeth not away.

But

But what death is that to which Ephraim was sentenced, and from which he has here the promise of deliverance? Some say it is natural death. But what righteous man would expect deliverance from that? Would the all-wise Jehovah speak of natural death as the most dreadful of all punishments? Too many of the giddy and thoughtless of the mass of mankind, laughing at it, meet it with unconcern, whilst the righteous, who know the terrors of the law, and the glories of the age to come, suffer it. What is natural death but an extinction of the present scene of things; in itself it implies not pleasure or pain. All must die---the high, the mighty, and the noble, with the beggar, the miser, and the contemptible---It is the lot of humanity; and can this be holden up by Jehovah as a peculiar punishment that should fall upon Ephraim? "I will tear them like a lion." What, by natural death? So Jehovah hath already torn Noah the righteous man, who alone was found worthy to be preserved when a world was cut off. So he destroyed Abraham his friend, Moses the holy man with whom he conversed face to face. This destruction of Ephraim must therefore be something more awful than natural death; for all must die; and in itself death is not a punishment. If, therefore, the death of the body had been all that was threatened to befall Ephraim, it would not have been any threat to be heeded; for where is or has been (except Enoch and Elijah) the man who did not expect death?

The prophet speaks of the iniquity of Ephraim as fully compleated---"The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hid." According to the custom of the merchants of the East in their traffic, the money was told out, it was then put into a bag, which was bound up, it was marked and sealed, and it passed current without any future inspection.----- Thus God represents himself as having told out the iniquities of Ephraim; the number of them was compleated; he therefore had (still keeping on the simile) bound up the bag, and laid it by in a place of security, not to be increased by an accumulation of additional guilt, nor to be diminished by the sin-subduing fruits of repentance.

Yes; "the iniquity of Ephraim was bound up; his sin was hid," His guilt being compleated, vengeance was gone forth; and the prophet speaks as seeing the just judgments of the Almighty as having swept him away from the world, and placed him in a place of conscious existence and direful sufferings--- "The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place
of

of the breaking forth of children." Here we behold the cause and the effect---The cause of Ephraim's destruction was his folly; he leaned unwisely to his own ways, and sinned; and the consequence that followed was, that, after repeated warnings and checks, he was swept from the earth by the providential conduct of God, in war, pestilence, and famine; and in his future state was doomed to sorrow, misery, and woe, compared to the pangs of a woman in labour. Compare this with the speech of Wisdom, in the first chapter of Proverbs---"How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in scorning? and fools hate knowledge? Turn ye at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit upon you; I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh like a desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you: then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but shall not find me: because that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; they would none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof; therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." Here is an awful description of the conduct of God with the wicked in a future state. In the present period of existence whosoever calleth upon him in the day of adversity, although he be a sinning Ahab, or an impious Manasseh, he will hear them, and be their saviour; but in that dread state, they shall call upon Jehovah, as Dives did upon Abraham, and he will answer, "Because I have called, and ye have refused,---I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh."----"Son, thou in thy life-time hadst thy good things, but now thou art tormented." In the present state of things, men see not distinctly the hand of Jehovah in the government of his providence; but in the future state there is no infidelity---the devils believe-----the tormented spirit beholdeth the hand of Jehovah. God doth indeed there meet his rebellious creatures as a lion; as a leopard he observeth them, yea, even as a bear that is robbed of her whelps. Arrayed in terrors he meeteth them, and subdueth them till they tremble at his power. They call upon him for mercy, for pardon, for forgiveness. "O for a drop of water to cool my tongue, for I am sore tormented in this flame!" Thus

Jehovah leaveth them to feel positive pain, and with it sorrow and anguish of heart for all that is past. This deadens not their feelings; no! it awakens every tender sensation of soul; it calls to mind each endearing tie that sweetened their passage through life; and with Dives, they are ready to call upon the Father of Spirits to exert every natural, moral, and even preternatural means, to stop their much-loved friends in the mad career of their impiety, and snatch them from the painful sufferings of that death which the Scriptures call by the name of destruction---that place of utter darkness, where there is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Solomon puts this language in their mouth (Prov. v.); "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me. I was almost in all evil, in the midst of the congregation and assembly." Sinner, look here--Thou mayest hide thy sin in thy bosom, but the hand of Jehovah can search it out; there is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed, however secret thy conduct may be. If thou dost not now repent, and forsake thy sins, though death and the grave cover it, yet there, even in the gloomy mansions of death, the arm of Jehovah shall shake thy soul, and, with horrid anguish, bring thee to mourn over thy past misconduct, and acknowledge his justice whilst thou shudderest at thy past iniquities.

This is a very gloomy subject, but how much more gloomy must it be to be a subject of it for days, for weeks, for months, for years, nay, perhaps for ages! How wise shall we be if we now strive to avoid it! We know that punishment must end, because it is of a corrective nature; but it must first have answered its end; the subject of it must not only see and love virtue, but must loathe vice; dread it as a serpent, and flee from the least appearance of it; obedience to God must be the only anxious desire of his heart, and his every thought must be love. Whether to bring the mind of the wicked to this state will take a revolution of the earth when turned into a lake of fire, or a sabbath of years, or a period of forty-nine thousand years, before the grand jubile is proclaimed, who can tell? Things revealed belong unto us and to our children, but things that are concealed unto God. But though its duration is concealed, its end is not; and if we may judge from the rest of the providential conduct of God, the work of restoration will be gradual: for our Jehovah, although a consuming fire, yet rewardeth every man according to his works.

There

There are some men who attempt to ridicule the idea of limited punishment; nothing can please their imagination but endless, unceasing horrors—sin and blasphemy increasing daily, ages upon ages, without end! O my soul! enter thou not into their melancholy fancies; but dwell upon the retributive justice of God, and fear his holy name. There is no occasion for the imagination to blow up the fire of hell into a hotter furnace than God himself has made it, or to lengthen out its duration—He has described it sufficiently dreadful. Hear, O sinner, and tremble, and turn from thine evil ways, lest thou become a partaker in the threatenings he has pronounced against all that do evil. “Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee? When thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst unto him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother’s son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether like thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now, consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear in pieces, and there be none to deliver.”—Dreadful thought! that Jehovah, the father of mercies, the author and supporter of my existence, the God whose very nature is love---that *he* should reprove me for my sins before men and angels---that *he* should lay open before me the wonders of his providential care, and my repeated acts of transgression; whilst with horror I in vain attempt to turn from the loathsome sight. You who have felt what a bitter thing it is to feel the anguish of an accusing conscience, you can testify, that this tearing to pieces of the soul is, if possible, ten thousand times worse than the most cruel death. How many, to escape the tortures of their own heart, have attempted, by their own hands, to flee from the sight; but alas! when at the bar of Jehovah, none can deliver! the pangs must be felt! whilst hell itself, with wide extended portals, stands ready to receive the unhappy sufferer, and increase the anguish of his mental pains by positive fire! Oh! ’tis a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. His gospel you have trampled upon, and treated his earnest invitations to accept of pardon, with contempt.

When I consider the awful consequences, to the wicked, of the day of judgment, I think, and tremble. What, in the pre-

sent state of existence, can possibly compensate for the losses that may befall me on that day, if I now do not make my calling and election sure? To have my Maker turn his back upon me, and say, I never knew you! To hear him order me out of his presence, as unworthy to set my unhallowed feet in that holy city where he delighteth to dwell; and not only there to lose my portion, but to have my face covered with shame and confusion whenever I behold his glorious face; that face so glorious, that none on earth can behold it and live. To behold the Saviour sitting upon the throne of judgment, and see him unfold the books which shall call to light the secret actions of my past life, with all my public transgressions! Lord, keep me from beholding my secret sins in the light of thy countenance. Who could endure that awful sight! Who now can behold himself, though but partially, in the secret moment of private recollection, and not be disgusted! But to see all our secret sins, our impure thoughts, and unholy deeds, stand in array, whilst pride and self-love flee away from the sight, and leave us a prey to self-contempt, calling upon the mountains and rocks to fall upon us, and hide us from the presence of the Majesty of Heaven---

Many men are fond of drawing their companions into the same sins as themselves are guilty of. If you are determined to make a trial of future judgment yourself, Oh, do not this! The consciousness of your own guilt will be fully sufficient for you to bear, without increasing your sorrows by the aggravating reflections of your companions, whom you have made to be partakers of your sufferings. As the recollection of having done good gives delight to the godlike mind, so the reflection of having occasioned others to suffer evil, will prove more troublesome than even all our own sufferings. To look around you on your former thoughtless companions, and see them weeping, wailing, and gnashing their teeth, and to think at that moment, Had it not been for me they might now have been in a state of bliss, enjoying the presence of their Maker, and doing his holy will; but it was I that led them into evil; I taught them to laugh at divine mercy. I have robbed them of their purity, their happiness, and glory; and caused them, by my transgressions, to be consigned to this place of torments.--- Oh, then, call no company to travel with you that downward road. If you are resolved on hell, wisely dare to go alone, that you may only have personal crimes to suffer for, unaggravated by the accumulated guilt of others.

I will

I will not arm this second death with more terrors than God himself has done. It is indeed an awful state; but some have painted it with additional horrors: they have represented it as unceasing in its duration, and to be continually increasing in its guilt and in its punishment; each day adding fresh blasphemies to those that are past, and God, in consequence, adding fresh fuel to their fire, whilst the devil and his angels are the instruments in his hands of tormenting the damned spirits.--- But where did they learn these things? **Not** from the Scripture; that describes the punishment of the second death, but mentions not any of these things: they are the flights of fancy, the invention of some melancholy brain, and received into the church as truth in the days of antichristian darkness: as the day of divine knowledge arises, these clouds of superstition and ignorance shall pass away.

Believers in divine revelation ought not to add to, any more than they would diminish from, the language of Scripture: they should at least do the sacred writings as much justice as they would the Commentaries of Cæsar, or the Comedies of Terence; was this the case, instead of representing the character of Jehovah as that of an almighty revengeful tyrant, acting towards his mistaken creatures without any end, they would behold in him a compassionate father, whose mercies fail not; a benevolent Deity who loveth every thing that he hath made, whose tender mercies are over all his works, rendering his creatures less punishment than they deserve; one whose awakened wrath moveth with unwilling feet, whilst his ready mercies swiftly fly. I know the terrors of the Lord, and would not, for ten thousand worlds deceive any man concerning them; neither would I blacken the character of my God by painting it with aggravated horrors---everlasting woe, unceasing tortures, misery whilst God exists!--Where are such words to be found? Not in the language of divine truth, but in the doctrines of men. Wherever the word *endless*, or *everlasting*, is found in the Scriptures, or any other words of the like import, their real meaning must be determined by comparing text and context with the other passages where the same words occur; but that they any where convey an idea of *eternity*, I deny, and dare to challenge the boldest assertor of the eternity of hell torments to prove it. By the assertion they destroy the harmony of Scripture, erase the promises from the word of God, confound divine truth, open the flood-gate of infidelity, and totally destroy the doctrine of retributive justice,

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with the equality of the ways of Jehovah, the rewarder of every man according to his works.

But death itself shall be destroyed; for thus saith Jehovah concerning Ephraim, whom he had caused to suffer the second death, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave." This promise is full of grace and goodness, made unconditionally to the most wicked and rebellious of people, and shews forth the sovereign free grace of God in the most striking manner. "I will ransom," not the righteous, but those who had forgot God their Saviour, who had broken his covenant, who had despised his laws, who had neglected his worship, who had preferred the service of stocks and stones to the obeying the living God---them, saith Jehovah, will I deliver from positive pain, inflicted as a punishment for their sins. The hand of hell was closed upon them; I will open it, saith Jehovah---I will ransom them from its power---I will unlock its grasp, and Ephraim shall be delivered.

This is an absolute promise---"I will ransom them from the grave;" not one condition is expressed. I will do it, saith Jehovah; I myself; not thine own merit, nor the merit or wisdom of others; but I will ransom them. I will not enter again into covenant with them, upon the performance of the conditions of which they shall be delivered from their place of suffering; no, unconditionally, of my own free will, by my own free grace, this rebellious, this disobedient, this gainsaying people, I will ransom, saith Jehovah, from the power of the grave; I will fit them for the enjoyment of life and happiness; I will call them again my children, and they shall call me father; for they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

I once did not behold the greatness of the divine love as I now do, but verily thought that all such as were saved must here believe, in the Lord Jesus, and bring forth the fruits of faith in holy obedience; all the rest I concluded would be endlessly cut off from peace and righteousness and joy. Upon this narrow scale, I excluded millions of the human race from future bliss. Examine the bills of mortality, and you will find that more than two thirds of the children of men are saved without faith or obedience; witness the infants who die under two years of age. If God could not save without these, what would become of them? They could not either believe or obey, and they must be lost; for in Adam all have sinned; therefore, if faith and obedience here are absolutely necessary for salvation, they must be excluded from future bliss. The
makers

makers of human articles of faith do not see the awful extent which the premises they lay down must lead to. Blessed be the loving kindness of God my father, I see things now in a very different light; I behold that he hath provided a Saviour, and a great one; and that as they, poor helpless innocents, sinned in the loins of Adam without their consent or knowledge, in like manner, without their consent or knowledge, he hath provided a remedy; and therefore, as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive. Hence arises the difference of the providential conduct of God. On the infant who sinneth without his consent or knowledge, salvation is bestowed without his consent or knowledge; but on such as have sinned with their consent and knowledge, salvation cannot be bestowed but with their consent and knowledge. A child of five years of age has some small share of understanding; from five to ten years old, it is considerably more; they are capable of judging between what is right and wrong, bad tempers and actions and good ones. Suppose such to die ignorant of that salvation which cometh by faith, would you doom him to endless unceasing misery? Cannot the Father of spirits find means to restore him to knowledge, purity, and peace? Surely he can; in him all live, and move, and have their being; and as he formed them for happiness, so he knoweth how to communicate it.

You suppose the gospel is preached to those who are grown to years of discretion; but they seem to slight it. They who are come to years of maturity are capable of judging, and yet sin with their free consent, and with their knowledge. This was the case of Ephraim; he had the good news of salvation preached in figures under the Mosaical dispensation; he rejected the proffered mercies; with the full possession of his rational faculties, he cast away divine truth from him. Now, if Jehovah can save an infant under two years of age, without either his knowledge or consent, and can bring the infantine and youthful knowledge and consent of others to receive salvation, has not he power to subdue the manly understanding of his creatures by ways that we know not fully, and joyfully, with the utmost consent of their understanding, to receive salvation?

But laying reasoning aside, the promise of Jehovah is absolute---“I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.” If the prison is destroyed, the prisoner must be free.

free. Though Ephraim may be locked up in the prisons of this earth, in a prison so strong that no human arm can possibly deliver him, yet, if Jesus, who has all power both in heaven, earth, and hell, if he pull down the building, stone by stone, shall he not be able to unchain the unhappy sufferer, and ransom him from the tyrant's power? He both can and will do it; he will deliver the prisoner out of the pit in which there is no water. "By the blood of the covenant he will say unto the prisoners Go forth." If we saw a prison pulled entirely down to the ground, should we have a doubt in our minds whether or not any prisoners were confined therein? Most undoubtedly we should, from the state of the prison, pronounce the impossibility of the case. In like manner will the Father of Mercies put it beyond a doubt whether or not there are any unhappy creatures in a state of suffering; he will destroy the prison. "O grave! (or *hell*) I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hidden from mine eyes." I am glad to observe this passage here, because it fully confirms the absolute and unerring certainty of the action. It is not said, as when God was about to destroy the earth, that he repented of that which he had done; but, on the contrary, that he will not only perform that which he hath promised, in destroying hell and death, but that all looking back with regret to that which he had done should be for ever done away---repentance should be hidden from his eyes.

I daily make my request to God, through Jesus, who shed his blood for us, that none who hear me may ever fall into the condemnation of the second death; for the pangs thereof are awful beyond the powers of human language to describe: but we must not disguise the truth; though awful, they are not eternal; they are a means to an end; and in me it would be sin was I to say that God would never restore to immortality and bliss his punished subdued creatures; for God hath promised to ransom them from death, hell, and the grave.

I call upon my own soul, and upon all that hear me, continually to give God thanks for his great and precious promise that he will destroy hell and death: not that I fear them; for I enjoy, through the favour of my God, that continual peace that none but he can give or take away. It is not, therefore, for fear, that I preach this doctrine. I had hope in the promises of my God, and enjoyed the full assurance of faith, before I knew the extent of his love; but the knowledge thereof has widened my hope and strengthened my faith. Seeing, therefore, so much power, wisdom, and goodness, as I now do
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in the Deity, I feel my thankfulness and love increased; and knowing the terrors of the Lord, I exhort you to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold on the age of life.

But some may say, If this doctrine be true, why do not the wise, the learned, and the good, the gospel ministers, the servants of the living God, believe it? Alas! my friends, this was the question the Pharisees of old put concerning the Messiah---Have any of the scribes and Pharisees believed on him? Our blessed Lord referred them to Moses and the prophets---and to them do I refer you, with this observation, that it is evident, from the apostolic writings, and those of the fathers, that the doctrine is not new, but that they believed it, taught it, and lived under a sense of the power of it. May you do so, that you may not be hearers of the word, but doers of it also; that you may be amongst the number of those who shall form the chain of true believers from the days of Adam to the second coming of Christ.

By this doctrine we are taught to know the character of God, that it is love and wisdom---we discern all the mazes of divine Providence end in universal good---and even in the severest dispensations we still behold him as our Father.

This doctrine preserves the believer from infidelity; it takes him by the hand, and leads him to the oracle of truth, and causes him to see infinite wisdom and unbounded goodness in the whole œconomy of nature and of grace; the man who from his youth had been taught this doctrine would not turn infidel, seeing that he would behold in all the chastisements of God, both in this age and in the next, the good of the criminal was one end intended.

It destroys bigotry from the hearts of Christians---it ends their persecutions. No wrath, no malice, no strife, no evil speaking, no back-biting, can possibly remain in the bosoms of those who receive the doctrine in all its connections---they are not of any party; but of the great sect of the first-born whose names are written in heaven; they are the disciples of Jesus, and all their ambition is to be found worthy to be called by his name.

There is a measure of self, of pride, of perverted nature, in every man, which must be destroyed, that God may be all in all: nothing is so likely to eradicate these as the doctrine of God's Universal love. It is this alone that can harmonize

the jarring parties of professors; and when the watchmen of Israel see eye to eye----then, indeed, shall the earth be covered with the knowledge of the glory of God. It is for this purpose, and not for the love of novelty or desire of fame, that I preach this doctrine. And it is my heart's desire, that all the Lord's people may be prophets, teaching the boundless love of God to the sons of men.

END OF THE SEVENTH SERMON.

S E R M O N V I I I .

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

COLOSSIANS, I. 13.

Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

THE whole sentence, as it stands in connection, runs thus :
“ For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding : that ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God ; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long suffering, with joyfulness ; giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light ; who hath delivered us from the powers of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son ; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

This sentence contains almost the whole of Christianity ; for to be filled with all knowledge of the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding---to walk worthy of the Lord, unto all well pleasing---to bring forth abundantly the fruits of good works---going on, continually increasing in the knowledge of God---having the heart strengthened with the glorious all-supporting power of divine love, so as to be enabled

bled to endure the various vicissitudes and trials of life with all patience, and long-suffering with joyfulness---to give thanks unto the Father, through the overflowing gratitude of the heart, because he hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light---having translated us out of the kingdom of darkness into that of his dear son---is, indeed, to be grateful from a consciousness, that, through the divine favour, we are made partakers of all we can possibly want to make us holy here and happy hereafter. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. But who is able to speak aright of these things? Who can fully describe the riches of divine grace that these words contain? May the Father of mercies, by the enlightening operation of his spirit, open our understandings, and cause us spiritually to discern the greatness of his goodness, that we may indeed rejoice in his mercy, make known his truth, and live to his glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

It is not only one of the best acquisitions, in point of its consequences, to know the will of God, but it is one of the most pleasing: yet it is an acquirement no man can have any chance of obtaining, with any tolerable degree of perfection, without the Scriptures. If we take a survey of mankind, we shall find that the ignorance of savage nations increases with every generation---the means of grace decreasing as darkness increases. Their time is so much taken up in the obtaining of the necessaries of life, that little time is left to trace up, through a chain of evidence from the works of creation, the being of a God, and the knowledge of what he would have us to do, or to leave undone. It is therefore a great blessing to be possessed of the revealed word of divine truth; for from the Bible a man may, with ease, in a few days, learn more of the nature of the Deity, the government of his providence, and his will concerning us, than, without it, many ages could teach the most studious of men. For therein we are taught what we ought to do, and examples are given to us, not only in the conduct of God, but also in the actions of men---the happiness that arises from obedience is displayed in the most striking light, as also the dreadful consequences of disobedience; no exaggeration, no false colouring, nothing unnatural heightens the scene, but all is simplicity, truth, and nature---all accords with the experience of all men.--In it we have placed before us the promises of God, to animate us on our journey by holy hopes---hopes adapted to the desires of every rational creature---suitable to the wishes of the most ignorant

ignorant or most enlightened of men. In it are likewise the threatenings of God---awful in their nature, but suitable to correct the sinner, and sufficient to deter all who rightly understand them, from doing that which is evil---and all is written in the plainest language; such, that any man, possessing plain common sense, may fully comprehend. If the folly and wickedness of mankind had not cast a veil of obscurity, by mis-translation, spiritualizing, and mystery, over the word of God, vast loads of annotations and commentaries would never have been written---expositions which confound the simple beauties of truth, by multiplying words without wisdom.

If it is a blessing to know the will of God, how much more blessed is it to be filled with *the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding!* The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Of what little avail, therefore, is it to the natural man to be in possession of the will of God, since, it being contrary to all his pursuits, quite opposite to all those things from which he expects his happiness, all its precepts, hopes, and fears are disregarded as foolishness: unbelief hides the beauties of divine truth from him; he follows the carnal pursuits of his appetites, and relishes not spiritual enjoyments. He therefore must be in possession of all wisdom and spiritual understanding, to know the power of truth, and to relish it. For as the members of the body have each their corporeal faculty of hearing, seeing, tasting, and smelling, any of which being perverted by disease or habit, the right exercise of that faculty is destroyed, until the evil that is in it is corrected---even so it is with regard to the mental faculties. Of what service is the possession of the Scriptures to that man who regards them, as a sealed or a useless book? The having the will of God in his possession is of no benefit to him if he never examines it; it is a large fortune in the possession of a man who neglects wealth, and considers it as an useless thing. In like manner, to be filled with all knowledge of the word of truth, without having this knowledge in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, would be an useless possession. Of what avail would it be to know the letter of the word from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Revelations, without loving that word, and wisely applying it to increase our faith, encourage our hopes, give greater fervor to our love, regulate our actions, and to bow down and subdue every high and lofty thought in full obedience to God? Without all this the word
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of divine truth in the head, is like riches in the possession of a miser, who has not the heart to make use of them : instead of a reward being obtained by his superior knowledge, it will only increase his condemnation.

Not being filled with the knowledge of the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, is the reason that many, who have been well acquainted with the outward letter of Scripture, and have talked much about it, and have even obeyed some of its commands, and been looked upon by the world as Christians, have nevertheless turned away into infidelity. They never had entered into the spirit of Christianity; they had not become one with the Father and the son; their minds and their pursuits were not the same; they never had fully entered into the spirit of the truth : for if their heart had been engaged in the service of God—if they had been filled with all wisdom, and their whole spirit had entered into the understanding of it—how great, then, would have been their love to the word ! how inconceivably precious, would that word have been unto them ! Happy, truly so, is the man who finds this wisdom, even the man who gets this spiritual understanding : for the merchandize of it is better than silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold ; she is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her.

To be wise unto salvation, what a blessing ! The Scriptures of truth are alone able to make us so. It is astonishing how they raise, open, refine, and exalt the understandings of those who are converted by them, and read them diligently, entering into the spirit of them. I have been a happy witness of their efficacious power in enlightening the minds of those who sat in darkness. My eyes have beheld the men who, in their natural or unconverted state, have, in their understanding, been but a degree above the brutes ; but, having been brought to the knowledge of the truth, and to a relish of the word, have acquired an understanding that has astonished their former acquaintance, and a nobility and dignity of manners, that has commanded the respect of mankind---the word of God has, indeed, polished both body and mind, as well as spirit. Many indeed have been the instances of men, who, without natural gifts, without acquired knowledge, without eloquence
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of speech, or elegance of manners, from no other source than the Scriptures, have been the happy instruments of turning many from darkness unto light, and from the service of sin and Satan to love and serve the only true God. This is the best proof that can be given of an improved wisdom. The tree is known by its fruits---that understanding is brought to the highest degree of perfection that does most good: that man's understanding is the most valuably cultivated whose conversation tends most to the glory of God and the welfare of mankind.

But why are we to be desirous of being *filled with all wisdom*? Not to talk learnedly upon the truths of Scripture---not to be able to display before the sons of men the acquirements of our mind---but *that we may walk worthy of the Lord*. How great a thing is this! how desirable is the attainment of it by a Christian! Consider how great is the Lord! how worthy to be feared, loved, revered, honoured, and obeyed. There is not one of you but can preach upon this part of my text. You all know what it is to walk worthy of the Lord; yea, there is not even a child here but knows what part of his conduct would be unworthy of his earthly parent, and would tend to cast a reflection upon him for the education he had given him. You all know that lying, swearing, stealing, lasciviousness, uncleanness, and every other vice, is unworthy of a Christian. Not only outward acts of wickedness are unworthy of the Lord, but all wrong tempers, sulkeness, anger, wrath, malice, uncharitable or uncandid judgment---all these are not worthy of a Christian: God is love! they are contrary to the nature of the Deity; they are unnatural in one looked upon as a child of God. In a wicked man they are natural, for they are diabolical tempers, and it is expected that the children of Satan should possess them. But peace, and love, and joy, and righteousness, belong to the disciples of Jesus; and that servant acts unworthy of his Lord, who does not possess them, and pres daily after a more full attainment of them: but he that has the contrary tempers, or commits such unworthy actions, ought not to make mention of the name of the Lord, lest the unworthiness of his conduct, should, in the eyes of the world, cast an odium upon his profession, and tempt luke-warm professors to sin. When we reflect upon the holiness of the character of Jehovah, we cannot but be astonished at his forbearance in not punishing, by some awful judgment, such ungodly professors, that his own spotless character may be known to mankind.

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To *walk worthy of the Lord* is, in the whole of our conduct, to be holy, pure, free from evil in all our actions, peaceable, gentle, kind, affectionate in all our manners, virtuous, good, benevolent towards all men, living to the praise and glory of God our Father: thus did Jesus walk when upon earth; he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate in all his actions from the sinful conduct of the sons of men. His voice was not heard in vain disputations, noisy wranglings, and brawls, and quarrels; but he was peaceable in his conduct, gentle in his manners, tender-hearted, and full of pity, overflowing with affection, and the sincerest love, not only to those who loved him, but to his enemies; even to those who reviled him, spit upon him, scourged him, and crucified him. He was virtuous in all his conduct, and good in all his actions, and like God his father, whose tender mercies are continually streaming down upon the good and the evil; so was he, full of benevolence to all; and his outward actions were a constant manifestation of the benevolence of his heart, in continually going about doing good. Now, all who are called by the name of Christ, should walk even as he walked---worthy of the name of Christ, as he walked worthy of the name of God; commending our souls in well doing unto every man's conscience. He, therefore, that would walk worthy of the Lord, should make it his constant study, to regulate all his words and works by this noble principle---love to God the great creator of all things, with all the heart, the mind, and strength, and love to his neighbour as to himself.

That ye may walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing.—
Unto all pleasing of God. Now God cannot be pleased with him who believes on the son of God, and yet obeys him not. We should not be pleased with a child, or servant, who knew our will, and yet neglected the doing it---and can God our father be pleased with us, if we have the knowledge of his will, and yet neglect to obey it? *Unto all pleasing of God*---No man can succeed in pleasing God and man in all his actions; and that Christian who would prefer man-pleasing to the pleasing of God, is guilty of a species of blasphemy against his Lord; blasting the fame of Jesus his master, by not causing his actions to reflect upon mankind the conduct of Christ Jesus. We speak not, therefore, as men-pleasers, but as pleasers of God, even of him who trieth the reins and the heart. If we please God, we shall please all that love God and know his will: we shall please the son of God, even him who gave himself a ransom for us; for whatsoever pleaseth the
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the Father, pleaseth the son; and all that you do that displeaseth the son, displeaseth the Father. If you love not Christ, and honour him not by your life and conversation, you must displease the Father, who hath commanded all men to honour the son even as they honour the Father. If you do thus walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleasing of God, you, by so doing, please not only the son of God, but all the holy angels, those pure and spotless spirits, who continually minister before his throne; their voices are in your favour; they approve of your conduct, and speak of your faith and obedience in the courts of heaven. All the saints of God will likewise be pleased with you; they will approve of your walk, and earnestly desire for the inrollment of your name amongst the spiritual worshippers of Jehovah, even the spirits of just men made perfect. The saints below, who know the will of the Lord, will approve of your conduct; they know that whosoever doeth the will of God shall be accepted of him; they therefore take delight in seeing you walk, and in beholding your upright conversation. Thus heaven and earth smile upon you---the whole church, militant and triumphant, are pleased with you---when your walk is so worthy of your Christian profession, as to be pleasing unto God. Those who walk not worthy of their calling will not be pleased, neither will those who oppose the gospel: in all probability they will call your circumspect conduct hypocrisy. But what could tempt you to hypocrisy? Nothing is to be expected from the world by the circumspect Christian, but contempt, ridicule, and reproach. Who would be an hypocritical Christian for the pleasure of being considered as the dirt and offscouring of the earth? And from God what could be expected by the hypocrite, but wrath and dreadful indignation? If men were to have ten thousand pounds per annum for living a holy, devout, godlike, humble, benevolent, useful life, they might be tempted to be hypocrites; but where nothing is to be got, and much to be lost, hypocrisy cannot be expected to be very common. Were men to be under the constant apprehension of the Inquisition, in case they made not a profession of Christianity, they might be tempted to be hypocrites; but where the fear lays on the other side, and all the plans of pleasure, honor, and profit are against it, hypocrisy is not a very probable thing. Seeing, then, that a man cannot gain any thing from the world by religion, but has much to endure, it is not likely that, for the pleasure of enduring sufferings, men should become religious hypocrites; braving, for the scorn and reproach of mankind, the

awful indignation of offended Deity. Therefore, although I have heard many charges brought against people for religious hypocrisy, I believe them not, seeing that a man can get nothing by it; and that, when known, he would be hated by men in this life, and punished by God in the next. Too precise a Christian cannot be in his obedience, and in every action of his life, unless, indeed, he add traditions to the pure word, like the scribes and pharisees of old. When we consider the temptations to which we are exposed, in our friendship, our visitings, businesses, and amusements, all call aloud unto us to watch---for we cannot love God too much, fear him more than we ought, or obey him too exactly.

But perhaps, some will say, If all my actions require such constant attention to be paid them, I shall grow weary in my way: tired, and worn out with continual attention, perhaps I shall turn back into the world, and become an awful monument of divine justice. I am bold to tell thee, O doubting Christian, if thine heart is right there is no danger; for the things of God are eternally new---they leave no empty vacuum of the mind to be filled up; but give thee constant employment; and increased pleasure in the doing of it. Thou shalt have a peace in thy bosom that the world knoweth not of, and pleasures that they cannot enjoy. When death hath closed thine eyes, and thou art admitted into the great family of the first-born, thou wilt find, that when ten thousand years have rolled away, with all thy increased wisdom, thou wilt find thyself but as an infant in point of knowledge; the powers of thy mind still expanding and stretching forward after the Deity: he is the great centre of attraction unto all his creatures, and he will continually find them increased employment---employment fully adapted to the increased knowledge of his will, thine enlarged heart, and improved faculties. But even here below, the more we walk worthy of the Lord, the stronger and stronger shall we continually grow; and the nearer we draw to the wished for haven, the stronger shall we smell the perfumes that are wafted from the heavenly Canaan; and with Paul of old, we shall long for a safe landing on that immortal shore.

“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, *being fruitful in every good work.*” Some men, and they too professors of the gospel, ridicule the idea of good works; but the Scriptures, on the contrary, seem very partial to them; they talk much about them, and exhort, not barely to an occasional good work, but to a being fruitful in every good work.

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If the gospel did not find a Christian employment, Satan soon would---he has a number of things pleasing to the idle man, to fill up his time---cards, chit-chat, plays, and many things else, which if not sin, are, at least, near of kin to it; these invite the fleshly passions of the human heart to the very borders of iniquity. To the man who loves God, time passes swiftly away in the doing his will. Whatever is done in obedience to the command of God is a good work; and to him who feels gratitude of heart to his Creator for the mercies of redeeming love, such good works are truly grateful. He feels no aching void, no idle time tempts him into evil; between reading the Scripture, thinking on them, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, performing his social and relative duties, studying history, biography, &c. &c. seeking out the distressed, comforting and relieving the afflicted, ordering his family, instructing them in their duties to God and man, and innumerable other *et ceteras*, he can find sufficient employment in good works for the Christian to perform, and fully to enable him to be fruitful in them. If he has any complaint, it is not of wanting employment, but of wanting time fully to enjoy the delightful employments he has to perform.

Good works are a source of continual exertion to the human mind; the man who will be fruitful in them, must join thought and action constantly together. The man who would be scripturally just, must do unto all men as he would wish them to do unto him. Easy as this duty seems at first sight, upon examination we shall find that it requires us constantly to sit in judgment upon all our actions, weighing all we do in the scales of justice---holding our selfish passions with a steady rein---and at last causing self-love to decide against itself in favour of our neighbour.

Again, in our conduct of life, what activity of mind is required, least while we are generous, we should cause our good to be evil spoken of, by being unjust. Owe no man any thing, saith our Lord: if we rightly consider this command, what a continual exertion of watchfulness would it cause, to enable us to bring forth the good works of obedience? What a guard must the generous mind put upon itself, lest, like Saul of old, it should prefer sacrifice to obedience.

If negative good works require such a cultivation of spirit, to make the Christian fruitful, what must we say of the positive good works which the Christian is called to perform, not leaving the others undone! Such as feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, visiting the sick, the prisoner, &c. searching daily

for opportunities of doing good, like God our heavenly Father and Jesus Christ our great example: and yet, after all these are done, a higher good work still remains to be performed, even the examination of our own hearts. This is indeed an arduous task---to know ourselves, to sit in judgment upon our whole conduct, to arraign ourselves at our own bar, and cause the word of God to sit in judgment upon all our actions, yea, even upon our thoughts and words, O my friends, did we do this daily, we should find many things to mend; many a wrong temper, and many a wrong action, that self-love had approved of, would then be held up to abhorrence, and turned from with shame.

Notwithstanding the activity of the human mind, it does not love self-correction; there it is lazy, even to sluggishness. Be advised---dare nobly to strive to shake off those idle tempers, that would keep you from overcoming yourself: once conquer these, and you will soon be victorious over every other temptation. Resist the devil, saith the apostle, and he will flee from you. Begin with thyself, thy habits, thy wrong propensities, thy peculiar temptations; these strong bulwarks of sin destroyed, and thy whole heart brought into full obedience to the word of truth, thou wilt, indeed, continually do the will of thy Father who is in heaven. But shouldest thou, O Christian, look back, like Lot upon Zoar, with an eye of pity, and say within thine heart, of the least of thy sins, Suffer it to live; let me enjoy it; lo! is it not a little one? Soon shalt thou find, that the pleasing phantom is of speedy growth, and of such increasing power, that his gigantic arms are capable of entwining chains so strong about thee, that thine utmost resolution cannot break them.

That you may be fitted to the performance of good works, let me exhort you, as Paul did Timothy, to give yourselves to meditation. This is, indeed, one of the hardest and most difficult of tasks: My people do not know, said Jehovah of old; and he gives this as a reason for their ignorance---they do not consider.---The want of consideration occasions ignorance. Would men meditate on the commands, on the threatenings, on the examples of divine truth---would they consider the wisdom of God in foretelling, and his faithfulness in performing---would they meditate on his promises, see their greatness and their glory, and by faith realize them, they would indeed lay in such a stock of mental ability, with such an anxious desire to please God, as would make them fruitful in every good work. Yes, Christian! never more wouldst thou be

be heard complaining of idle time, of want of employment, of emptiness of mind, or making any of the frivolous excuses that ignorance makes, idleness takes hold of, and folly pleads in her behalf. But, on the contrary, a something would be before thee; a reality, grand, beautiful, and satisfactory; time would never hang heavy upon thine hands; between supplying the wants of nature, performing the necessary duties of life, enlightening thine understanding, and communicating thy knowledge, thou wouldst have enough to do, and thou wouldst do it with delight.

“ Being fruitful in every good work, *and increasing in the knowledge of God.*” The unhappy cause of the various sects of Christians, is their not paying obedience to this precept.--- Every sect has some part of truth, but none have the whole of divine truth: they seem to reason as if they could not go forward in making additions to their present stock of knowledge. Surely, as the child that has learned his alphabet may be taught spelling, reading, science, and go on in learning to ten times the age of man, without having gone a thousandth part through even his possible human acquirements, so might the Christian, daily, even through an eternity, go on increasing in the knowledge of God---by growth in the knowledge of that which he saith, and hath said, doeth, hath done, and still will do. Oh for the arrival of that happy day when spiritual pride, and party zeal being destroyed, the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea!

Christian friends, when we consider the infirmities of human nature, we must acknowledge it is indeed a great thing for us to know the perfections of the Deity! His omnipresence---“ Whither shall I go from thy spirit? whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.” Astonishing thought! who can comprehend the omnipresence of Deity! Local beings as we are, when we only think of it, we are filled with amazement, and lost in the contemplating of the magnitude of our meditation.

Contemplate the omnipotence of that Being who formed an insect, and with the same hands machined the vast orrery of nature! The more we are acquainted with geography, by bringing us to an intimate acquaintance with the earth, the more will it fill us with solemn awe, when we meditate on his almighty

almighty power who formed the earth, the sea, and their various innumerable inhabitants. But lift up thine eyes, O man! behold the solar orb, and the earth with all the planets dancing each their diurnal round; whilst the comets take their unknown courses, according to his appointment, and the stellar lights bind up and enclose the whole machine. Truly the heavens declare thy mighty power, O Jehovah! and the vast expanse proclaimeth the omnipotence of thine arm. Thou alone doest what thou wilt in hell, in earth, and heaven; and all the hosts that inhabit them obey thy will. Wonderful art thou in power, O my God! who shall dare to say to thee on any occasion, Wherefore doest thou thus?

The contemplation of the power of God should lead us to stand in awe of him, and not to deviate from his commands. It should lead us to consider the continual possibility of his faithfulness. Is any thing too hard for the power of that God who formed all things? What a source of delight is the contemplating the power of Jehovah, as manifested in the workmanship of his hands! I pity the ignorant man, who saunters about complaining of having nothing to do, when the vast field of nature lays open before him, invites him to the contemplation of the beauty of its parts, and the astonishing arrangement and combination of the whole. Surely the man who can trifle away his hours in shuffling pieces of paper together, or sits gaping at the sight of nature burlesqued, whilst the works of his Creator lie unheeded before him, surely such a man can have but an infant soul! The iron hand of adversity must teach him to think, ere he can sit down with the first-born sons of Jesus, to enjoy the wonderful works of the great First Cause of all, the Father of Spirits.

Reflect upon the wisdom of God; examine thine own form, thine arms, thine head, thy body, thy legs; survey their symmetry; how beautiful! and at the same time how perfectly adapted for usefulness! Examine the unseen parts, the arteries, the veins, the pores; consider the heart, the lungs, the liver, the kidneys; take notice of the muscles, that give strength to every member, and the elastic ligatures, which give motion whilst they tie each various part together. Curiously and wonderfully art thou made, O man! what wisdom has the Great Architect manifested in the formation of thy body!----- But rise above the mechanism of thy outward form; examine thy mind, its powers of retention, of thought, of judgment, how astonishing! how surpassing knowledge is man! Examine his wisdom, manifested in the bridges, houses, palaces, bulwarks,

works, he has built. Behold the stately vessel, proudly sailing on the ocean, and bidding defiance to the rude tempest. This was the workmanship of man. If he is so wise, how infinite must he be in wisdom, who formed him, and millions of such creatures ! endowing them all with intellectual powers. Descend from man, examine the beauty of the minutest insect, how exactly fitted for its end are all its parts. It is the workmanship of infinite wisdom ; his creation teems with life ; every part so combined by his infinite wisdom, that like links in a chain, each depends upon the other, and the whole upon him, the great First Cause and Last End of all things. Its order proclaims the wisdom of its Maker, and the excellency of his government.

But how great is his goodness ! God is love ! his tender mercies are over all his works ; he loveth every thing that he hath made ; his mercy endureth to the future age ; to that age of jubilee when there shall not be occasion for Jehovah to exercise his mercy ; for as mercy is the going forth of compassion in comforting a creature under distress, the period will come when there will not be a creature under distress, to whom Jehovah can shew mercy : for when all his creatures are subdued by Christ---when he hath reconciled all things, whether they be of heavenly or earthly original, by the blood of the cross---when, by the blood of the covenant, he hath brought forth all the prisoners out of that pit in which there is no water, then will God be all in all, in every creature ; his will will be the rule of government ; every heart will be in his image ; the whole spirit of every creature whom God hath created, will be conformed to the image of his son. God the Creator will look upon all things that he hath made, behold their beauty, their order, their harmony ; and his mercy, which now goeth forth in acts of compassion, will then be changed into affection, delight, love ; God will indeed be all in all, and all his creatures will be in him.

But as this glorious period hath not yet arrived, behold, O Christian ! the goodness of that God, who, in the conduct of his providence, openeth wide his liberal hand, and all things living are filled with plenteousness. When we but consider the magnitude of London, its numerous inhabitants, upon what various causes depend the supply of their food, how innumera- bly many links there are in the chain that keepeth them together, and giveth them food to eat and raiment to put on, we must confess it is his hand alone which keepeth the chain unbroken, and preventeth pestilence, famine, and death. Ex-
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tend thy survey; comprise within thy view the wants of a nation, nay, the wants of a world, and its infinitely innumerable inhabitants. Reduce thy survey, consider the hand of that God who hath hitherto helped thee, O man! Perhaps thou art hoar-headed, and he hath led thee through the weakness of infancy, the follies of youth, the independance of manhood, and here thou art still after all thy cares, doubts, fears, dangers, follies, weakness, sins; I say, here thou art, a monument of his goodness, the child of his providence, the dependant on his bounty. His goodness has perhaps led thee to think again on thy rebellion and his love, and taught thee not to trust on man, whose breath is in his nostrils, but on the living God; he supplieth thy wants, and giveth thee that peace which the world knoweth not of. Christian, thou oughtest indeed to join in the apostle's prayer, and say, Increase us in the knowledge of thee, O God.

"Strengthened with all might." We are all weakness and helplessness of ourselves: unable to think, or speak, or act aright, but through the mighty power of our God. Was it not for his communicated power, we should be able to do indeed but little; but God strengthens us with all might; it is this that supports us in the midst of doubts, and fears, and temptations; it is this that enables us to rise above them, and to come off conquerors: for we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

"According to his glorious power." And shall we then doubt the possibility of our success in our spiritual warfare? Is any thing too hard for Jehovah? Is there any besetting sin which, through his glorious power, we cannot overcome? Is there any evil which, being under his protection, we need to fear? It is confidence in this glorious power that renders the religious man consistent in his character and conduct. Who can tell the greatness of this power! May you, my friends, be strengthened with all might, to overcome every evil, according to the greatness of this glorious power, by which you are supported, and this shall enable you to act aright in every Christian duty, which otherwise you would be unable to perform.

"Unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness." Conscious weakness fills a man with fear; it unmans, and takes away even the real strength that a man has: but when a man has strength, and knows it, he can patiently bear the scoffs and taunts of mankind. Impatience is a proof of cowardice, and cowardice of real or supposed weakness: the Christian, therefore,

fore, who is strengthened with all might according to the mighty power of God, must manifest it by his patience in all the afflictions and cross providences of life, and by his long forbearance, with joyfulness, under the contradiction both of saints and sinners: for it is the temper of Christianity that must manifest the reality of it: without these it is all emptiness; sound without sense; not the light but the ridicule of mankind.

Glorious is the power of Jehovah; it is infinite, but glorious, because its exertions are always directed by goodness. How wonderfully great doth that power manifest itself to be in the salvation of fallen man! But it is equally glorious, because the act casts a ray of splendour upon the character of Deity that would not otherwise have been visible. In vain would fallen creatures have strove to rise above their lost estate to a state of purity and holiness, unaided by the divine power; but the exercise of that power, through the medium of Christ Jesus, will not only now save the first-born, the elect of God, but will finally restore all fallen creatures to a state of perfection that shall make the power of Jehovah appear truly glorious: for the whole creation, in all its parts, answering the wise and benevolent purposes of its good Creator, shall give glory to his name by its beauty, harmony, and love.

God, who has this glorious power, is much readier to bestow it upon us than we are to ask it of him. He waiteth to be gracious; he treasures up the bounties of his hand, that he may liberally bestow them upon all his children who feel their wants and come with faith unto him: he rejecteth none; and whensoever two or three are met together in the name of Jesus Christ his son, what things soever they agree to ask the Father in his name, believing, they shall receive.

It is greatly to our satisfaction to know if we have this power or have it not; we are not left to the doubts and uncertain feelings of our hearts, which may be too often excited or depressed by outward circumstances, or even by the food which we eat: we know that we are the children of God when we do his will; we are confident that we are partakers of this mighty power when we can do those things which we before could not do; and I know that I have this power, because I preach the gospel, the good news of salvation by Jesus Christ, unto you: for none can preach the gospel unless he is sent.----- Confident that I preach the gospel, I own the authority from whence I preach it; not in my own strength, but because I am strengthened, for this purpose, with all might, according to his

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glorious power, unto all patience, and long suffering, with joyfulness.

Do you love God? There was a time when you did not love him. Whence, then, ariseth the difference in your tempers between what you now are, and what you then was? Is it by the exercise of your reason, or by the mighty power of God? Do you love the people of God? This also is by his mighty power; for as we were enemies to God by wicked works, so we hated all that loved him and were obedient unto him.----- Do you love your enemies? No natural man can do this. If, then, you do more than others, it is God alone that gives you this power, to reduce the precepts of religion to practice, and make the speculative opinions of the highest degree of human virtue to be a certainty, nay, enabling you even to rise high above them, soaring aloft on the wings of holy obedience, daily drawing nearer and nearer to the perfections of Deity.--- The knowledge of my spiritual state is not an imaginary thing; it ariseth not from certain infatuated feelings of a mind inflated by fancy, but it ariseth from the full exercise of the judgment. I know that I please God, and that he approveth of my conduct, and hath caused my name to be written in the book of life, when I am conscious that I keep his commands, and that I am enabled by him to do those things which no natural man can possibly perform without that power which cometh from above; but, as that power is ever ready to be bestowed upon all who ask for it, it is no disadvantage to man that it must come from God.

Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. There is an inheritance for us with the saints in light; but we must be made meet for the enjoyment of it. It is a glorious inheritance---an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation. This inheritance the apostle Peter had such glorious ideas of, that he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." Our Lord likewise speaks of this inheritance, John, xiv. "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place

place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Paul likewise lived in holy expectation of a part in this inheritance of the saints in light. "For (saith he, 2 Cor. v. 1.) we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Again, speaking concerning Abraham, Heb. xi. 10. he says, he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The holy men of old speak in the most exalted human language of this inheritance. They call it a crown of life and glory, a sceptre of righteousness, a city whose builder is God, a kingdom that cannot be moved, all denoting its stability, its dignity, its power; the meanest of these descriptions exalts the consequence of the inheritance, and represents the smaller portion in it as of greater value than all the present kingdoms of the earth; for like the passing shadows they flit away, but this inheritance hath Jehovah himself for its founder, and his unchanging promise for its support.

None who believe in the Scriptures can dispute the reality of this inheritance; it was the hope of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and is now the animating hope of every sincere believer. At all times light hath been sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. They have not, as yet, beheld this light; they have not experienced this joy; clouds and darkness have overshadowed their ways; hope alone has, with a glimmering light, illumined their steps; but on the millennial morn, when the sun of righteousness shall arise, then shall the clouds disperse, the darkness shall flee away, and with joy and gladness of heart shall they receive, at the hands of their Lord, the rewards he hath prepared for all that love and fear his name, and patiently wait for his appearance.

As this is a real inheritance, so there is a meetness requisite for the taking possession, and for the enjoyment thereof. The God that hath created the sun, moon, and stars, that formed this earth, and hath cloathed all nature with beauties, hath given man such faculties of body and mind, as may enable him to improve the beauties of nature, and to encrease his enjoyment with his improvements; inducing man, by motives of interest, to exert himself in the cultivation of the powers of his mind, that, by useful arts and sciences, he may be enabled the better to enjoy the luxuriant blessings that his beneficent Maker hath bestowed; and all this only for a few fleeting days! The hand that formed the mighty monuments of art, seeth them at farthest but for a few rolling years, and then they

pass for ever from his view. The same God that hath given to nature such a profusion of beauties, and to his creature man such a capability of improvement and enjoyment for so small a space of time, hath surely prepared superior beauties for a future state—beauties that will require more perfect faculties and higher attainments to enjoy them, seeing that his hand hath formed them to be the enjoyment of ages by the saints in light. As the concerns of the soul are superior to those of the body, so must the spiritual inheritance be superior to these temporal blessings. But however beautiful, however desirable, they cannot be enjoyed unless we are made meet for that inheritance,

Luke xx. 35. our Lord speaks of those that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age, and the resurrection from the dead; strongly implying, that of professors there are many that shall not be accounted worthy to have any part in that inheritance, nor even to be amongst the number of those who shall share in the first resurrection. Now by comparing these passages together we shall find that worthiness and meetness are the same thing; it is, in fact, a fitness for the inheritance.

1st. A fitness for the enjoyment of the inheritance.

2dly. A fitness to perform the duties thereof.

A fitness for the enjoyment of the inheritance, implies that the mind of the inheritor is capable of enjoying the inheritance of the saints in light; that his temper of mind, and all his pursuits are like theirs. This is a philosophical proposition.—Of what use would be the beauties of nature to the blind man? or all the noblest strains that music could produce to the deaf? In like manner what pleasure could the spiritual enjoyments of the kingdom of Christ yield to the carnal mind? As I cannot live in fire, unless my nature is changed, so I could not live in the enjoyments of heaven unless my heart was changed—unless I had a mind fully adapted to the pleasures and pursuits of the place. With the heart of Satan, heaven would be hell to any one; but change that heart, let it not be the accuser but the lover of the brethren---not the adversary, but the willing subject of Christ, and heaven would be indeed heaven, and all its glories would be desirable. In like manner, if you are meet to enjoy the inheritance of the saints of light, you must be a son of peace, have a heart of love, with a life of holiness; for in this inheritance, there is no hatred, envy, animosity, or contempt; no irreverence, or neglect of the worship of God, But every knee bows down to him, every heart adores him---all is peace, and joy, and righteousness.

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God has indeed prepared an inheritance for us, and we must be made meet for the inheritance. Now it is impossible that we should be thus meet unless God hath cleansed our hearts--- unless we have the spirit of God formed within us. But although the work is of God, we ought not to be discouraged, seeing that he is a God hearing and answering prayer---a God near at hand to all that call upon him.

If God hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, we ought to give thanks unto him, for it is an inheritance worth the enjoying: and we were in time past enemies unto God by our wicked works; but he hath made us meet by making us partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. We therefore ought to give thanks unto him, and bless him continually for his goodness, in having called us out of darkness into light.

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness. Great, awfully so, is the power of darkness! Men, dwelling under the influence of the enlightening truth of Scripture, know not the greatness thereof; but were they to take a survey of those heathen countries where revelation is not known, they would stand astonished and terrified at its oppressive influence: for they dread the power of Satan, whom they call the Evil Spirit, whom they fondly think rules over them like a God; and this is the reason that most savage nations pay more homage to him out of fear, than to God, their good Creator, out of love. If asked the reason, they readily answer, that he is always ready to injure them, and they therefore find it necessary to deprecate his wrath: but they are not under the like necessity of deprecating the Good Spirit, because he loves not to injure them, but at all times delights to do them good.

When we look back upon past ages, and notice the terror that shook the hearts of men, from the powers of darkness, and their consequent superstitious reverence of witches, wizards, necromancers, and all the numerous train of those who practised the black art, we cannot but observe the power of darkness on the human mind, and the infinite obligation we are under to the Father for the gift of his son, who has, by the gospel of our salvation, almost banished all such terrors from the Christian world. As the light of truth spreads, the shades of error flee away, and shall continue to flee, till truth, by the brightness of its shining, filleth the whole universe with light and glory. Then men shall no more fear the powers of darkness,

ness, but they shall rejoice in the light continually, and give constant praise to that God from whom it flows.

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness. Paul observes, that his servants we are whom we obey; we acknowledge the authority of that sovereign whose laws we keep----- When, therefore, we are the servants of sin, having the mind covered with obscurity, and all our future expectations full of doubts and fears, and all our present enjoyments perverted, looking for happiness in the error of our ways, in following our corrupted inclinations in search of good; being led captive by Satan at his will; we are then indeed, truly subject to the power of darkness, which leads us to the doing of things contrary to our better knowledge. And this is one reason why I cannot admit the doctrine of philosophical necessity: the friends of it assert that the mind of man always acts from the strongest motive. Now I conceive that the sinner acts sinfully because he is under the power or influence of a darkened mind; for the motives he has to do good are, if possible, infinitely stronger than the motives to do evil, and that even in those who commit iniquity: to do good we are led by the pleasures which arise from the approbation of our conscience, by the benefits that mankind receive from it, and which must, even in this life, return back with tenfold advantage upon ourselves: add to this, the good, in all its various ramifications, that branches out from every virtuous deed, with the various promises of future advantage that keep towering one above another, till the eye of faith itself, looking through the telescope of truth, is lost in the contemplation of them—Yet with all these motives to action, behold the innumerable hosts of the sons of men who have the word of truth in their possession, and yet commit iniquity with greediness: it is not from the strongest motive for action, but from the weakest, owing to darkness having overshadowed their mind, and their perverted imaginations not being able to penetrate the thick obscure, or break asunder its weighty chains. Since, then, I have every impulsive motive to do good, and none to do evil but a momentary gratification, I cannot but conclude that I am under the power of darkness: and would to God, that we all could say, this was the whole cause of our sinning, and not be under the necessity of adding, that we, by giving way to iniquity, are, at the same time, under the power of moral depravity.

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But blessed be God, he hath given us his son, that we may be delivered from the power of darknes; and we are not more sensible of eating and drinking, than we were of being delivered from the clouds and thick darknes which overshadowed our spiritual understanding, before that we received the knowledge of divine truth, by faith in Christ Jesus. I well remember the time when light pierced through the clouds, and darknes fled away: I felt new power—fresh strength seemed to be imparted from above: the things that I before could not perform now seemed very easy; the chains that before bound my soul now seemed broken: I beheld the love of God, like an overflowing stream, rolling on, and flowing through his vast creation: I felt the force of divine faithfulness comforting and animating my soul; I heard it whisper to my heart, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love*. How forcibly then did divine goodness strike my heart, and call forth all its grateful affections to my God! I felt, I knew, that I loved God better than I loved my father, or mother, or wife, or any other relation; all the endearing ties of fraternal affection and human friendship gave way to the love of my God. There was nothing but what I could do or suffer for his sake. Was not this a sensible deliverance from the power of darknes? Instead of living to gratify my passions, I now saw the end of my existence, and rejoiced in living to the glory of my God. Instead of being filled with wrath and malice, and every evil temper, to be able to love my greatest enemies! Oh! it was a change surpassing all my expectations! It was indeed a deliverance that filled my soul with righteousness, peace, and joy. Now, my brethren, do you know these things? Is the power of darknes broken from your minds? Can you love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength, and your neighbour as yourself? Do you do good to all, and pray for all? If so, then you are delivered from the powers of darknes, and translated into the kingdom of his dear son.

The kingdom of his dear son. This is not a kingdom of this world, but a kingdom called out of the world; a kingdom that owneth Jesus of Nazareth to be the anointed of the Father and their king: whatsoever he hath commanded, that alone is established in this kingdom as the law; that alone which he hath forbidden, they avoid. None are considered as the subjects of this kingdom, because they attend this or the other church or chapel, or are runners after the gospel ministers of the day---or for belonging to this, that, or the other denomination of Christians---or for eating, or drinking, or abstinence---or the observa-

observation of days, but obedience to the faith, constitutes the character of a subject of this kingdom, and this subject hath aionian life; for this is aionian life, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the anointed saviour, whom he hath sent.--- Now the fulness of aionian life is a fulness of submission of all creation to Jesus---a bowing of the knee to him, and owning him to be the ruler, to the glory of God the Father. The man, therefore, who is translated into the kingdom of Christ, and hath aionian life begun in him, that man bows the knee to Christ---he has within him the holy leaven, which shall keep fermenting until every thought shall be brought into full subjection to the divine will.

In whom we have redemption, through his blood, even the remission of sins. Was it not for this, I should live without hope for myself, and for you, my brethren; nor should I have any hope for any of the sons of men. I am under the necessity of considering all men as sinners; both Jew and gentile; all are gone astray---none doeth good, no, not one. What is there in nature that could cause me to see a God reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses and sins? What arguments could I use to reclaim men from the error of their ways? But blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, he hath given his son to be a ransom for all; and ye who now believe in him have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. There is not one upon earth but needs pardon for the sins that are past, and that pardon comes through Christ alone. There is no other name given, but the name Jesus, by which men can be saved. It is he that died for us, and who has risen again for our justification; and whosoever believeth on his name, setteth his seal to God's veracity; he is redeemed by the blood of Christ; he has the justification that cometh by faith: to that man God will not impute iniquity, but he casteth all his sins behind his back. Seeing, therefore, that God hath set forth his son as a propitiation for our sins, let us, having by faith embraced that salvation which he has held out in Christ Jesus, walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleasing, being fruitful in every good word and work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

S E R M O N IX.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

ACTS, VIII. 33.

In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth.

THIS verse is a quotation from Isaiah, liii. but in this place loses all its beauty by its incorrectness. Bishop Lowth, in this, as well as in many other places, has rendered Christianity a considerable service by rectifying the errors of our translators of the Old Testament. This passage he renders thus:

“By an oppressive judgment he was taken off;
And his manner of life who shall declare?
For he was cut off from the land of the living,”

The word judgment has two significations in the English language: 1. It signifies *understanding* or *reason*; that faculty of the mind by which a man wisely determines any thing; hence it is said concerning one half-witted, He is quite a fool; or concerning any one who speaks of that which he doth not understand, it is said, How simply such an one talks! he speaks irrationally; he utters his words upon this business without judgment. Of such a character it is written, “A fool is known by his much speaking;” but of the contrary character, that “he speaks not of things beyond his reach.” In this sense none who read of the calm, determined self-possession of our Lord, when at the judgment-seat, can suppose that Luke

the historian uses these words. In his humiliation it is evident, that, how great soever were his sufferings, yet his judgment was not taken from him: no; he had the full possession of his rational faculties, and in the exercise of them witnessed "a good confession before Pontius Pilate;" he bore his testimony to the truth with that dignity and heroic fortitude which became him as the son of God.

2. Judgment is taken for a sentence passed upon any man or thing. An oppressive judgment is that sentence which overbearing power, unduly exercised, passes unjustly upon unprotected innocence; whilst a just judgment is an upright determination, passed after a full and righteous investigation: it is in this sense that it is said, that an unrighteous judge taketh a gift, which blindeth the eyes of the wise; making him, for filthy lucre's sake, examine only one side of the case before him, perverting the cause of the fatherless and widow, and crushing the poor beneath the terrors of oppressive law. In this sense, but with a good meaning, it is prophesied concerning the Messiah, that

"He shall judge thy people with righteousness,
And thy poor with judgment,"

It is in this sense the historian uses this quotation---"In his humiliation his judgment was taken away;" his righteous judgment; that upright sentence which an upright bench would have passed upon an innocent person, was, by an oppressive judgment, illegally taken away, in such a manner, that none could appear at the unjust tribunal to testify his manner of life, his innocence of conduct, his wisdom, his gentleness, his purity, his goodness; for the arm of iniquity was lifted up against him, and his life was swept away from the earth.

The first thing that strikes our attention in these words is, that Christ went through a short but suffering state of humiliation: short, indeed, was his life, but great, exceedingly great, his humiliation! on account of the grandeur of his birth---the first-born of creation, the only begotten son of the Father---as also for the glory, the dignity, the supreme excellency of his person; for by him, and for him, were all things created, however elevated above the sons of men in majesty and honour, or how low soever beneath the lofty situation of man in their nature, and in their weakness---notwithstanding their excellency or their meanness, it was his hand that formed them, and for his government were they created. He was the elect of God, in whom his soul delighted; who dwelt in his bosom before angels were formed, or this lower nature was, by the fiat

fiat of almighty power, called forth into existence. How great, therefore, was his humiliation!

“ Borne on the wings of boundless love,
He left th’ eternal throne on high;
Our low degraded state to prove,
With man to mourn, for man to die.”

He did not degrade his heavenly dignity by condescending to be clothed in the gaudy decorations of human power, but uncloathing himself of all power, he made himself of no reputation, without name, wealth, or authority, and took upon himself the form of a servant, that form which required strict and constant obedience; and being thus found amongst his own people, whom he had called out of the world, amongst his brethren after the flesh, fashioned as a man like themselves, they knew him not as the son of God; they received him not as the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed of God; and he, in this humiliation of himself, to fulfil the will of his Father, and become unto us an example of obedience, became himself obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, stretched with limbs extended to the accursed tree, and rivetted to the deadly spot by nails penetrating the tender nerves, and all his body suspended by and sustained on his wounded members; dying, for hours dying, not by weakness of constitution, or a disordered nature, but by an overwhelming excess of pain!

Great indeed had been his prior humiliation! The highest state of human dignity was degradation of situation to the son of God; but that degradation was carried on in him from the womb to the grave. The son of David to be born in a stable! At twelve years of age, with a wisdom of speech that astonished the learned, and growing in wisdom; so that at years of maturity when he spake his enemies were forced to confess, that no man spake like him; yet notwithstanding his mental ability, he, on whose lips the multitudes hung with astonishment, even he, wandered about supported by the hand of pity! the scorn of the wise, and the ridicule of the profligate---without a place he could call his own, or a shelter for his head from the inclement storm. Spotless in his innocence, the eye of malice could not find a flaw in his character, yet was he accused of blasphemy, of gluttony, of drunkenness, and of treason; and at last, condemned on unproved charges, and crucified contrary to the laws of his country; he was numbered with the transgressors; his life was cut off from the earth.

The greatness of the humiliation of Christ is most visible when the dignity of his person is contrasted with the abject
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state to which he was reduced. Man is born to sorrow. It is necessary for the infant ruler to be trained in the school of adversity; he must learn wisely to govern by his own---often sad---experience. But in the Lord Jesus Christ were hidden such treasures of wisdom and knowledge, that he not only could create worlds innumerable, and filled with animation, but he could, nay had for ages, sat upon the throne of government, ruling them with understanding; for him, therefore, to lay aside the radiant glories of etherial dignity---for him, the representative of the immortal and invisible Deity---for him, who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God: for him, I say, to lay by his government, and to take upon him the form of a subject---to be obedient, even obedient unto death, unto the most degrading, the most cruel of deaths! Oh! this was humiliation! humiliation surpassing the attainment of any rational creature, from the highest angel who treads the realms above, to man, the Lord of all this world below. Far, infinitely far beneath him in dignity, they never could, by immeasurable lengths, reach that humiliation which the son of God underwent.

What adds greatly to the glory of Christ, in his humiliation is, that it was voluntary. No power in heaven, earth, or hell, could have dethroned him. He might have exclaimed,

“ League all your forces, all ye pow’rs above,
And with you let the whole creation move,
Ye strive in vain. If I but speak the word,
The fiat of the Deity is heard:
And, terror struck, ye lay before your Lord.

Even when he had descended from the throne of creation and humbled himself to take upon him human nature---when his own, that he came unto, instead of receiving him as the anointed of the Father, rejected him, derided him, and were about to put him to an ignominious death, even then, had he called upon his father, twelve legions of those bright and immortal beings who tread the etherial courts, would, in a moment, have appeared to his relief, and filled with terror and devastation that guilty land. There was not a moment of his ministration but what he could have advanced himself to what dignity he pleased, having all heaven and earth ready at his command, to do all his will. It is this exalts the character---it is this that exhibits, in lively and proper colours, the great things he did for us. He did much for us---he bare much from the contradiction of sinners for us; but he bare it voluntarily: he made himself of no reputation; he took upon himself

himself the form of a servant. Where is the character recorded in history, but the character of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, for the good of mankind voluntarily through life, stooped from a throne of dominion, and became poor and contemptible, possessed of no dignity, no outward marks of his former grandeur, and subject to that scorn, derision, and ill usage, which superior wisdom, united with poverty, meets with from hypocrisy, folly, and self-love, when reproved by it; but added to all this, he drank the bitter cup of divine wrath, and died agonising upon the cross! My God! who but thy son would have done all this? Who but he possessed love sufficient to become thus humbled for our sakes? His love alone was indeed superior to all mortal loves; and by his wonderful exercise of it, he hath smoothed our path to glory and immortality. Who amongst the sons of men would not think it hard to be charged with those crimes, which thou, my Lord, wast charged with? But if perfectly innocent of every charge that enraged malice could bring against them, how cruel would they think it! If silently they bore the reproach, mankind at large would be convinced of its truth: but should they attempt to defend their character, and retort back the falsehoods upon their foul accusers, the indignant scorn of insulted innocence would be construed into rage and self-love attempting to vindicate itself against the irresistible evidence of truth. This seems hard; but silently did our innocent blessed Lord bear all that malice, rage, envy, prejudice, superstition, and ignorance could invent to blast his character and prevent his usefulness. And thus doth it become his followers to act; they should follow on in the same path that he walked in, and tread in the same steps. In all things they ought to rise above the foul speeches of a prejudiced multitude, committing their cause into his hand who judgeth rightly. I have taken a pretty extensive survey of the *say so's* of mankind; of the desire to criminate on the one part, and the desire to *justify oneself* on the other part, and I am on the whole convinced from experience and observation, that the wisest way for a Christian to act, is to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man, cheerfully practising all the relative, social, and religious duties, according to the commands of God, and then leaving every contingent event depending thereon in his hands, silently bidding defiance to all the contumely, and insulting outrage of the children of Belial. Short as is the walk from this pulpit to the chapel-door, I would not step it to clear my character from the vilest slanders that malice could invent. Should Jesus approve of our character
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when he cometh, he will clear it from every aspersions when he clears his own; he will then make it shine gloriously: our false accusers shall behold and tremble and be confounded: this will be time enough for our character to shine gloriously, in innocence, before the eyes of our fellow-creatures. It is true, this is advice contrary to the wisdom of this world; but worldly wisdom is foolishness with God; and they who begin the disagreeable work of proving and sending, will soon find, that in this life they need have nothing else to do. But when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall awake, how awful will be the account they will have to render of their ill-spent time, their wrong tempers, their want of faith in the divine judgments, and that self-righteous mark of fallen-nature, an evil proneness to self-justification!

But after all, the most humiliating of all the scenes that our Lord went through was that of his death. Truly it is an awful thought to consider the creator and lord of creation led as a criminal to the bar of the creature—of the creature his own hands had formed! to see him there buffeted, spit upon, mocked, scourged, crucified! Was there ever humiliation like this? No man could have taken his life from him: he alone had power to lay it down, and power to take it up: therefore it was that his Father loved him, because he laid down his life for the sheep. Here was love! here was a voluntary abasement! an extreme of humiliating degradation to accomplish the purposes of that love. Love immense!--love infinite! or if bounded, bounded only by that creation which stood in need of the fullest display of it. Love ascending beyond himself to the immortal Source from whence it was derived, and descending to the minutest workmanship infinite wisdom had produced; expanding all around, and going forth in acts of benevolence to every creature whose misery called aloud for mercy.

In this low degrading state of humiliation, his judgment was taken away; justice was not done him; every principle of equity, as far as man was concerned, was perverted, that he might unjustly suffer an ignominious painful death. Nay, there was scarce the appearance of what the Jewish nation called law or justice exercised towards him. They could not accuse him of committing any crime against the Jewish state; no, nor even against Cæsar; nor against the laws of Moses. Not one criminal charge could they bring against him, either civil, ecclesiastical, or moral. One charge, indeed, they proved against him---he taught the people the knowledge of God, and the way of salvation. Debased indeed, must that govern-
ment

ment be that could act upon such a charge---abject the slavish minds of that nation whose rulers dared thus to pervert truth and justice.

“ Should it e'er come when law submits to pow'r,
With firm resolve my steady bosom steel,
Bravely to suffer, though I deeply feel;
Let me, as hitherto, still draw my breath,
In love with life, tho' not in fear of death:
And if oppression bring me to the grave,
And mark me dead, she ne'er shall mark a slave.
Let sober triumphs wait upon my bier,
I won't forgive the friend who sheds one tear.
Whether he's ravish'd in life's early morn,
Or in old age drops like an ear of corn,
Full ripe he falls on nature's noblest plan,
Who lives to reason and who dies a man.”

When they accused him of teaching the people from Galilee to Jerusalem, they might have added, He not only instructs their minds, but heals their bodies---not only opens their understandings to discern the truth, and by his instruction chases away the shades and darkness from their minds, but he likewise opens the eyes of the blind, and causes the dumb man to sing the praises of God, whilst he maketh the lame man to leap like an hart, with holy rapture at the wonderful manifestation made unto him of the divine goodness; and at the same time cheers the drooping spirits of the distressed with animating consolations. But they wanted not to search the truth; their deeds would not bear to be brought to the light for examination. Herod and Pontius Pilate, wicked men, yet men unshackled by prejudice, men who had no craft to lose, who feared not the being turned out of the synagogue---these men could examine the accusations brought against him---they could pronounce him guiltless---they, sitting on the throne of judgment, could aver, “we find no fault in him;” nay, although the high-priest hypocritically rent his cloaths, and shouted “Blasphemy!” yet, even before him, Jesus stood acquitted---his false witnesses, suborned to swear away his life, agreed not in their testimony. And the innocent Jesus, standing at the bar, was forced to be appealed to, that, by a perversion of his answer, they might have some colour of evidence, though utterly distorted, that they might pronounce him to be guilty and worthy of death. Pilate the heathen, the unjust, rapacious Pilate, wicked as he was, pronounced the accusation that was brought against him, (even if it could be proved) unworthy of so severe a punishment as death: he could see through the hypocritical veil painted over with the love of truth, and zeal for the

the character of God. Pilate could see through the veil, and behold that it was not through holy jealousy that they brought him to his bar, but that it was through envy. The contrast betwixt him and the Pharisees struck the common people greatly: they heard him gladly; they hung upon his lips: the gentleness of his manners, opposed to theirs, his holy, harmless, and undefiled life, while yet he mingled in the company of sinners, and led them to the paths of virtue, shewed the Pharisees in their proper colours, as proud, adulterous, and overbearing, shunning the company of all but their own sect, condemning the people by their precepts, making religion an intolerable burthen, and, by their lives, deterring from the practice of it.

Yes, it was through envy that they delivered the Lord of life and glory into the hands of Pontius Pilate; they envied him that purity of life and disinterestedness of love, which passed a silent but severe censure upon their iniquitous actions and the selfishness of all their most benevolent deeds: they talked of purity, sanctity, and truth; they held up themselves to mankind as the servants of the Most High God---the peculiar worshippers of Jehovah; whilst beneath the hypocritical garb of outward appearance, a long face, a long prayer, and the sound of a trumpet before them to proclaim their almsgiving: beneath these outward masks they had a spirit of self-love, of pride of heart, a love to filthy lucre, devouring the houses of the widow, and eating up the support of the fatherless, and desolated orphan; hearts full of adultery, impurity, and all uncleanness: they could not bear the short prayers, the open countenance, the humble manner, the generous spirit, the disinterested life of our Lord: his life condemned their actions, his words passed severe censures on their iniquitous conduct; therefore, like Joseph's brethren of old, they were enraged against their brother because he told them the truth, and, their deeds being evil, they could not bear it; because of their iniquity and hypocrisy they could not endure his life, which was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sin. In the midst of poverty his life shone with an holy lustre; whilst they, giving themselves up to all iniquity, seeing the wonderful miracles he performed, the purity of his doctrines disturbed them much, his piety more, but his miracles most of all. -- It was these that caused them to exclaim, Let us crucify him, lest the Romans come and take away our place and nation. They beheld these with fear, and trembling, and rage, and exhorted each other to put him to death; and, that they might blast his character, and
shew

shew before the nation their zeal for the honour of Jehovah; they accused him of blasphemy, but in vain, even with the assistance of suborned evidence they could not prove it; the charge, as every unproved charge does, returned back upon their own guilty heads. In vain did they afterwards accuse him to Pilate; the heathen magistrate, instead of being active to punish, feared. He thought him a good and a virtuous man, at least. Perhaps from the message of his wife, and the manner of our Lord at his bar, he might even have higher though confused ideas of the character of Jesus. Who art thou? said Pilate: the judge laid aside the dignity of situation, and began to converse with the criminal at his bar. He was convinced that justice was not done him; that envy accused and malice would destroy him. But though the outward garb of legal justice was put on, the character of our blessed Lord was cleared from every immorality that malice and injustice could bring against it. Pilate at last thought that he had hit upon an expedient which would save his life, but which, by its not succeeding, became the means of putting him to death. "Whom will ye (said Pilate) that I release unto you, Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" Surely, thought Pilate, if I contrast this infamous murderer and robber with the meek, holy, innocent Jesus, they will behold the immensity of difference between them, and release the innocent, but condemn the guilty. But alas! to the disgrace of the professional world, an heathen could feel the common sensations of equity and propriety within his bosom, which a worshipper of the true God could stifle. Truly they shall come from the east and the west, the north, and the south, who have felt the impulse of divine truth within their breast, and have acted upon it, and shall be received into the kingdom, whilst the children of the kingdom, who have had the whole of revealed truth in their possession, but have perverted it, or acted contrary to it, shall be cast out. Under the outward form of religion, it has remained for them alone to blast the character of Deity, to pervert his word, to persecute to death those who called upon his name, and, under pretence of doing the pure and holy God a service, to be guilty of murder and every iniquity. Professors may call themselves the disciples of Jesus, the true worshippers of the living God, the children of the Most High; but he that hath not the spirit of God is none of his.

"Whom will ye (said Pilate) that I release unto you, Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" In vain did Pilate reason with himself, If I propose this atrocious offender, this

breaker through every social law, this abominable character, this murderer, in opposition to this holy man, they will certainly reject Barabbas with disdain, and choose this good man as an object of their clemency. Surely malice and envy will be gratified with making him appear in society as a pardoned malefactor, without carrying on their wickedness to the shedding of innocent blood.

But alas! how mistakenly did Pilate reason: they said, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Thus was our blessed Lord pursued through their iniquitous courts of injustice. Examine with calmness every step that was taken, and you will find that through all his judgment, or that upright sentence that should have been passed upon his actions, was, in this awful hour of his humiliation, taken away, and even the decent forms of justice were not attended to; when he spake they spit in his face, buffeted him, ridiculed him, smote him. Was this justice? Does justice punish uncondemned? Was it any other person than our Lord Jesus Christ that was so treated, one might say, the court that permitted such proceedings to take place was more degraded than the poor innocent sufferer who was called to endure them: but as the character of Jesus, his rank in creation as judge of quick and dead, infinitely transcended the honours they bore, so his humiliation, in being the sufferer in such a degrading of justice, was infinitely greater than theirs, under any circumstances, could have been.

He was condemned contrary to their own laws, and contrary to the legal forms of every civilized nation. The Jews had a custom that no man should be taken up on a suspicion of guilt on any of their solemn feast days, or on the days preceding them, on purpose to prevent the hilarity of the day being beclouded with such unpleasant sights. But so great was their zeal to condemn the holy Jesus, that, contrary to this custom, they sat up the whole of the night preceding the passover, that they might take him; and having apprehended, tried him and caused him to be crucified, and this on their most solemn festival, breaking through every fence that wisdom or superstition had erected, putting him to death on the very day, the hour, and even the moment of that day when the law which they professed to venerate had ordered the paschal lamb to be slain. And in the accomplishment of their cruel purposes, they brake through those traditions which they held as sacred. It is true they would not defile themselves by entering into the judgment hall; but their conscience was not so tender but that they could bribe men to forswear themselves, and solemnly and deliberately

liberately take upon themselves blood-guiltiness. Conscience was delicately tender about the defilements of the flesh, but perfectly asleep, with all the calmness of undisturbed repose, concerning the defilements of the spirit. They could not pollute themselves by entering a court of judicature on a festival day, but they could pollute that court by rendering it instrumental to the murdering of the holy one of Israel. Themselves they would not defile, but cared not how much they defiled him. It was truly of a piece with all carnal, human will-worship; paying tythes of anise and cummin, attending to the trifling minutiae of unappointed ceremonies, but neglecting the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and truth. By their own laws it is said, that when a criminal was taken up, he was not, at the soonest, to be tried before the next day, and if condemned, not to be executed before the day after. And such regulations had wisdom in them: it gave an opportunity for the accused to consider of his situation, to collect his friends together, that they might appear to his character. It gave him time to consider the charges that were to be exhibited against him: and it gave some little time for his accusers to reflect, for their passions to cool, and for their judgment to be fully satisfied concerning the accused person's guilt, and of their own breach of the law, should they bear a false testimony. It likewise gave the judge time to reflect over the sentence that had been passed—of the aggregate of little favourable circumstances that had appeared in evidence, and of the propriety of enforcing the sentence, or pardoning the criminal. All these wise regulations, in the case of our blessed Lord, were neglected; he was taken up, tried, cast, condemned, crucified, and dead, in the short space of about fifteen hours; so that *his manner of life, who, amongst his friends, could declare?* Terror struck by the hand of power, they in the moment of fear had all forsook him and fled; and no time was allowed him to recall them as evidence to facts concerning his private life and public ministration. Our Lord seems to allude to this circumstance, John, xviii, 20, 21. "Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world, I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me what I have said unto them: behold they know what I said."

Another form of the Jewish court was, that no process could begin in it at night. It must be began in the face of day that the accused might be aware of it, and prepared to guard against its consequences; but this just regulation was not at-

tended to; the process against our Lord was began at night, he was precluded from taking any steps to exculpate himself by the illegal haste with which they hurried on his trial, even to the condemning him to death, as far as they had power, before the morning dawn arose.

By another law, to prevent a confounding of crimes, it was enacted, that no two criminals could be put to death together, unless their crimes were alike; but, contrary to this law, our blessed Lord was crucified between two thieves; numbered with the transgressors. If guilty of the crime he was charged with, it had been blasphemy, but he was executed not as for blasphemy, but as for theft; *his judgment was taken away*; not even the forms of equity were preserved; his trial, condemnation, and execution, were alike unjust, contrary to every principle of law, and in direct opposition to the accustomed practices of his nation. Pilate knew that they condemned him unjustly; perhaps there may be some one here present who may ask, Why then did Pilate pass so unjust a sentence, seeing that he had it absolutely in his power to have rescued him from their malice. Was not the sentence that he passed an acknowledgement of his guilt? The Romans aimed at universal dominion under all their various forms of governments; to attain it they ruled the nations with mildness, and according to their own laws; punishing with the utmost severity the oppressions of those whom they appointed as governors, and listening to every charge that was brought against them. Power, whether an individual or a nation possesses it, is the seat of jealousy; the least supposition of an encroachment stirreth up this dreadful passion; it was on this ground that the attempts of Pilate to release Jesus were rendered abortive. The Jews cried out, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend; who ever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." Here it was that every virtuous resolution of Pilate was staggered: the firmness of his mind in the defence of innocence was gone. Pilate had, whilst governor, been guilty of various acts of oppression, contrary to the spirit of the Roman laws; he saw, therefore, and he felt the force of the charge, and sank beneath its weight; he knew the suspicious nature of Tiberius, and he felt guilt in his own bosom; this made him to condemn the innocent; him of whom his understanding was convinced that he was an holy virtuous man, brought to his tribunal by the malice of his enemies. If Pilate had always done as he ought to have done he would boldly have put them at defiance. But the Roman governor could not say "Witness against me before the Lord and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose

whose as have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hands have I received a bribe to blind mine eyes therewith." It is sin that makes a man to be a coward, whilst innocence exalteth his courage, and maketh him bold as a lion. Pilate, had he done at all times his duty, would have felt the whole strength of his situation; he would have known that every good man in Judea would have approved of his conduct in resisting the malice of bad men against an injured innocent character; he would have been convinced that his conduct not only merited, but would have obtained, the approbation of the emperor. But, alas! unhappy Pilate! he knew that these bad men could have proved him so far guilty of the charges that they could bring against him, as to make it strong presumptive evidence that the remainder of it was well founded. Awful, indeed, is the career of sin; happy the man who dreads to take the first step in it; innumerable and mazy are its paths---he that entereth, wandereth, not knowing where to stop. The man who giveth himself up to his passions, of ambition, avarice, lust, revenge, &c. &c. may it not be said unto him, "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" Can such an one reprove, rebuke, or exhort? Will not self-condemnation prevent his duty? or hypocrisy, or want of self-knowledge, render his heart callous? And thus it was with Pilate; his own crimes made him to condemn the innocent.

And who shall declare his generation? His relations were far distant from him---his disciples had forsook him; they fled, fearing the same vengeance hung over them as had seized their innocent master---he had no friend at hand to plead his righteous cause---the sudden arrest of Jesus appears to have stricken his followers with terror. It is evident, from the historical narrations of the evangelists, that he was held in high estimation by a great mass of the people; they followed him from place to place; they hung, with silent attention, on his lips---they had been partakers of his benevolence, and their bodies had been restored to health by his miraculous power. The scribes and Pharisees, the mighty wicked, feared to touch him, because of the veneration that the people had for him. It would, on this account alone have been almost impossible for them to have carried their unjust cruel purposes into effect, had they but given time for his scattered friends to have rallied round him, and have boldly *declared his generation, his manner of life*, in these humiliating days of this his mortal generation. But his life was taken from the earth; truly it was the hour of the power of darkness.

" Success

"Success attended their infernal wiles:
 Brui'd in the heel, the woman's sacred seed
 Felt Satan's force, and fell, yea, prostrate fell
 Beneath the malice of his vengeful foe."

His life was taken from the earth. O how keen, at that dread moment, were the feelings of his faithful followers! Verily they thought it had been him who should have redeemed Israel! Alas! how different! him whom they had looked to have seen upon his throne, judging righteously, stands like a malefactor at the tribunal of injustice. The Messiah, the king of glory, is crowned with thorns, and the reflecting rays from the polished gems of his diadem are changed to streams of blood, gushing from his thorn-pierced temples. Behold the king of Israel, not upon the throne of his glory, with the kings of Sheba and Seba bringing presents unto him, and deputies from every part of the habitable globe prostrating themselves before him---but behold him stretched out upon the accursed tree---crucified like a thief---numbered with the transgressors, whilst the insulting sons of violence and superstition cry aloud, "He said that he should save others---let him save himself. If thou be the Messiah, come down from the cross, and we will believe on thee."

His life was taken away; and as he, by his doctrines and examples, taught us to live---so, by this his unjust death, he has taught us to die. My God! may I live like him, and, if called to the awful horrors of his death, may I learn like him, to glorify thee by my death!

Truly the wisdom of God is superior to the wisdom of man. Who could have thought the way of the cross was the path to glory? But because he hath thus suffered, therefore hath his Father highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. "For the transgressions of my people was he smitten," saith the prophet. Wonderful in wisdom and goodness is Jehovah our God! He taketh not pleasure in the death or groans of his creatures; fury is not in him, that it needeth to be appeased by the immolation of his only begotten son; but he findeth out a way by which he may be a just God, and yet a justifier of the ungodly. By suffering he perfecteth his son to be the head of creation: by his death he reheads and reunites the whole of his creatures by love; he gave himself for us, that we might tread in his steps. The spirit of love flow-

eth from him, the head, to his church, and through them to the whole creation, bringing every creature again into the image of God, whose nature, whose essence is love.

Here then we behold such good as fully justifies the Deity in causing an innocent person to be put to death for the benefit of the guilty. Besides, death was not forced upon the Lord by constraint; but good and evil were placed before him; and, supported by the hope of the good that was before him, he endured the evil of suffering for the sake of the glory that should follow---the glory of subduing, reheading, reuniting all by love, that, all evil being destroyed, all error corrected, every rebellion subdued beneath his feet, he might resign the crown unto his Father, that God might be all in all. The taking away the life of the Messiah by the death of the cross, was, to the Jews, a stumbling block, and to the Greeks it was foolishness: they could not see any end to be answered by it. The one expected an all-conquering Messiah by the power of the sword, a victorious subduer of the nations---the others thought that an almighty Being could pardon his creatures, and restore them to virtue and happiness, without putting his son to death to accomplish it. To the one party, therefore, the suffering state of the Messiah, contrasted with his future glory, was such a stumbling block, that they could not, nor have they to this day stepped over it. But to the wise and learned Greeks, ignorant of the prophetic writings, it was foolishness. They thought it proclaimed a weak, ignorant, though kind being, desirous to do good, but not knowing how to do it in the best manner. He did evil in killing the innocent for the guilty, that good might come. Neither party entered into the spirit of Christianity---the all-subduing power of love, the Father giving the beloved of his soul to manifest that, having given him for our salvation, he was willing, with him, freely to give us all things. The son, the Lord and maker of the universe, negligent of his own glory, through the greatness of his love, left the throne of dominion, took the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: and this account of the conduct of Christ is introduced by the apostle with the account of the motives or main spring of action in him which led to such conduct. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Here, then, is the moving cause, the main spring, of social happiness, so distant from the conquering hero's over-bearing spirit---so
contrary

contrary to the complex vain philosophy of the wisdom of this world---a spirit of hoping and enduring all things---a spirit of seeking our own good, not by constraining others to obey us, or honour us, or pay us tribute---but by doing good to all---by being like the Deity, who seeketh not any thing from his creatures, but openeth wide his liberal hand, and all things living are filled with plenteousness.

There was, therefore, a necessity for the death of Christ; and how light so ever Christians may consider this subject, the apostles of our Lord represent it as the foundation of all our hopes of salvation; they point him out as the only medium of access unto the Father; and declare that his name is the only name given whereby we can be saved. Thro' him alone have we acceptance with God. Let, therefore, the Jew stumble over the threshold of divine truth---let the wise men of this world turn it into ridicule---Christ crucified is our boast and our glory; we will glory in the cross of Christ, and like him go without the camp bearing our reproach; Christ died for our sins; the punishment of our iniquities was exacted from him, and by his stripes are we healed. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify the multitude, for the punishment of their iniquities he shall bear; therefore will Jehovah distribute unto him the multitude for his portion, and the mighty people shall he share for his spoil; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of the multitude, and made intercession for the transgressors.----Who his own self bare our sins in his own body upon the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

Viewing, therefore, the death of our dear Lord and master in this manner, it is truly of consequence unto us that his life was taken from the earth; and not unto us only who have returned unto the shepherd and bishop of our souls is his death of consequence, but unto all the creation of God, for he tasted death for all; he gave himself a ransom for all, a testimony for its proper season.

The grand end of the death of Christ was, that in Christ God might reconcile the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: it is the not seeing this important truth that causes the various denominations of Christians to have such contracted views of the Divine goodness. The whole of their exhortations to each other is built upon the ground of the Divine enmity to sinful creatures: they see not the love of God to his creature, but his hatred to the iniquity of

of his creature; they behold and expatiate upon the depravity of the creature, and upon his fearful apprehension of the divine vengeance; but they behold not the cause of this; the creature, knowing his guilt, but not knowing the divine love, hates as well as dreads that being whom he considers as having all power, and exercising that power to torment and not to correct; he therefore shudders at the terrors of the Lord. The language of Scripture tends to inform the mind of the creature, and give him right apprehensions of Deity. It doth not say, Appease the wrath of the majesty of heaven, if so be he may be gracious, and may change the hatred of his nature to love. No! the language of revelation is this---GOD IS LOVE! God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him might have everlasting life.--- In Christ's stead we pray you, be ye reconciled to God. Sinner, believe on him; God hath for Christ's sake forgiven thee; there is not any condemnation for the sins that are past. Why shouldest thou shew thy hatred to thy Maker by rebelling against his government? O turn unto the Lord, that he may manifest that he hath had mercy upon thee---that he may testify that he hath abundantly pardoned thee.

The death of Christ, by taking away the enmity of the human heart to the divine dispensations, taketh away the obstructions that are in the way of man's salvation, and disposes him to return to the Father of mercies: and I know of nothing that tends to humble and subdue the haughty spirit of man, like the sufferings and death of Christ. Oh! they pierce the soul! they shew him what true greatness is. The excellency of the love of Christ humbles, subdues, and levels in the dust, the ambition, the towering self-approbation of man. It opens the eyes of his mind; and, beneath the tinsel dress of self-righteousness, and the carnal approbation of the world, it lays open unto him his heart, it forces self-communion upon him, and the man judges his actions---not by their appearance before the eyes of man---but as they appear before the heart-searching God; and whilst thus confounded at himself, the love of God, manifested in the gift of his son, bursts forth upon his astonished mind, with all the radiance of divine glory. Then, indeed, doth the Lord Jesus appear the chiefest among ten thousand, the fairest of the sons of men, the altogether lovely: he is, indeed, precious to that soul who hath, by faith, washed himself white in the blood of the lamb. Astonished at his past rebellions, he now crieth out, I can no longer sin against so much mercy and goodness! Shall I sin that grace may abound? God

forbid! Thus the cross of Christ is indeed the mighty power of God unto salvation in him that believeth.

It is evident that the sufferings of Christ are a very important part of divine truth; so important, that all the prophets spake of them, and all the evangelists have recorded the fulfilment of their prophecies. When we consider this, whenever we hear or read of the sufferings of Christ with attention, it should lead us to self-condemnation, to a holy gratefulness of heart, and to an abhorrence of sin; we should be led into a contemplation of the Divine goodness, and a holy determination to act, considering ourselves not as our own, but as his who has purchased us with his own blood; and we should here also soar beyond the narrow regions of self, and see him not only the propitiation for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world, the great reheader and reconciler of all unto God.

Did Christ, who knew no sin, suffer for us? Then let us arm ourselves with the same mind; let the same disposition be in us as was also in him: he suffered willingly for us, let us suffer willingly for him: let the time past of our lives suffice. Jesus, the son of the Most High, left the bosom of the Father, and sacrificed all the pleasures that his heart panted after, for our sakes: Oh, let us sacrifice our bosom sins for his sake who gave up his own life upon the tree for us.

Was Christ meek, gentle, and kind in his manner? when reviled not reviling again, but permitting himself to be led like a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, in like manner was our lamb-like Lord, not opening his mouth. Do you tread in his steps, not rendering railing for railing, but contrarywise, blessing. In patience possess ye your souls. Be ye filled with meekness and humbleness of mind to God and man. It is but little that you can suffer here below—add not to its keenness by your restlessness, nor to its length by your resistance; but bear it in the spirit of Christ, and then shall ye have joy with him when he appeareth.

A lively faith in Jesus our Lord and Saviour is a matter of great importance. My saviour that was smitten for me, smitten with the tongue of men, with the keen sword of poverty, and with the heavy stroke of a cruel and accursed death, Oh, may I have a lively faith in thee---in thy appearing in the clouds of heaven in all the splendour of divine glory, attended by the immortal host, with the spirits of just men made perfect: believing on the divine promises I cast myself and all my concerns

cerns upon thy care, knowing that thou art able to keep to the uttermost all that which I have committed unto thee.

My beloved friends, never despair of the mercy of God, but consider what Christ has done and suffered for you; draw near unto him in the full assurance of faith, knowing that though your sins be as scarlet, you shall become whiter than snow; the mountains of guilt shall be levelled; and, freed from the burden of a condemned conscience, you shall go on your way rejoicing to his kingdom. May he give you all of his grace, that ye may prepare for the coming kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

END OF THE NINTH SERMON.

S E R M O N X.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

ACTS, XXVI. 27.

*King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that
thou believest.*

HOW very beautiful is this apology for his conduct, made by Paul of Tarsus, before King Agrippa! Plain and simple is the voice of truth, and carries with it striking evidence of its veracity. Paul had received a learned education, and attained knowledge surpassing those who had been through the same academic studies; his writings prove him to have been a very acute logician, very capable of making a most eloquent defence; and, whilst he only appeared to convince the understanding by the force of language, at the same time to arrest the passions, and force them to become willing agents in his cause; but instead of employing a train of evidence to set off his cause by the powers of oratory, as human wisdom would have done, Paul simply related facts; he declared his manner of life: he appealed to those who knew him for the truth of the facts he alledged, particularly his having been a persecutor of those who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. He says "I verily thought within myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth; which things I also did in Jerusalem; and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them; and I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." It was not likely that so
zealous

zealous a bigot, one whose mind was so firmly set against Christianity, would have embraced it, and suffered so much for it, unless evidence very strong, and most exceedingly convincing, was brought home to his understanding—evidence sufficiently strong to alter the mind of a man full of zeal against the doctrine, almost bordering upon phrenzy—a man puffed up with knowledge, led on by interest, and supported in his fullest career by the applause of his country, and by the utmost support of the great men thereof—Would he, without the fullest conviction of his mind, have endeavoured to support that faith which he had been so very eager to destroy? Therefore, I conceive that the sudden conviction of Paul, next to the resurrection of our blessed Lord, is one of the strongest evidences of the truth of Christianity. The simplicity of the narration carries with it a body of evidence in favour of the truth of the fact: “Whereupon as I went to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief priests, at mid-day, O king! I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying, in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.”

Paul was not afraid of being found in a falsehood; he relates not a story of a thing done in a chamber, but in the face of day; not in secret, but in the midst of company: he dreaded not being confronted with those whom he said were witnesses of the fact, although he knew them to be under the power of his accusers. Conscious innocence, the knowledge that he spake the truth, gave him boldness before his adversaries; if not true, how easy for his accusers to have exposed him for a liar, a hypocrite, and a knave---if he had not been sent to Damascus to persecute---if those sent with him had not been overpowered with the splendor of the light, and fallen to the ground, how easy was it for them to have proved its falsehood, and legally punished him for the deception! Their elevating the arm of persecution to crush him, instead of legally attempting to establish his guilt, proves their own wickedness, the innocence of Paul, and the truth of Christianity. Paul by their conduct stands acquitted, and his accusers stand condemned before the man they had accused as criminal.

“And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said, with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee

thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness; for the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether, such as I am, except these bonds."

King Agrippa was a wise and understanding magistrate, well acquainted with all the customs of the Jewish nation, possessing a noble, generous mind; happy would it have been for him if he had, indeed, become altogether like Paul in the reception of the truth of God; happy would it indeed have been for him, had he made his earthly scepter submit to the sceptre of the Lord's anointed. Agrippa lived to see the destruction of the Jewish nation, and the total overthrow of all its national polity; what a comfort would Christianity have been to him under the scattering abroad of that people over whom he reigned. Christianity is a manifestation of the Divine goodness; the reception of it is an acknowledgment of the supremacy of the only true God, and a confession of a holy determination, by a constant obedience to his laws, to own his authority; therefore, to be persuaded to be a Christian, would be no disgrace to the greatest monarch that ever swayed a sceptre. All the kings of the earth shall come to honour Jehovah, and, by a payment of tribute to his Messiah, own their subjection. In the presence of the God of the whole earth the Christian is a greater character, and bears a higher title than that of any monarch on the globe; for he governs himself, he is a spiritual representative of the Deity: and the glory of a Christian as much outshines that of an earthly monarch, as the splendor of virtue outshines all the pomp and parade of earthly grandeur: all the pleasures of life are not to be compared with the enjoyment that arises from peace of mind, and a consciousness that all our ways are well pleasing to God.

Perhaps some infidel may be here, who, in the midst of a land professing subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ, has lived the greatest part of his days without the knowledge of God, and his Christ, and yet has been the whole time in search after happiness. Oh that I could bring the doctrines of the cross home to your mind. You now, at times, doubt the being of a God, and yet rejoice to hear that there is a great First Cause, because
it

it takes away the anxiety from your soul---that cold deadening sensation that attends the thought of never ending death. Let me assure you, O miserable man, Christianity is a truth, its principles are solid, its basis sure; it is not a string of assertions, but it rests upon demonstrative principles; it calleth not upon your credulity, but it demands your examination, and rests its evidence with the closest investigation of your rational faculties, and asks for your faith, only as it proves its truth to your enlightened judgment. The man who reads the records of history, and believes, in consequence, that Julius Cæsar landed in this kingdom, but reading the Scriptures will not believe the things recorded concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, he is a credulous man, he rejects a collected blaze of evidence of things that can be demonstrated to be facts, whilst he credulously places his faith on a few assertions, which may be truth, but which has but a cobweb evidence to support them; for this rests chiefly in the assertion of Cæsar, and inferential reasoning; but the doctrines, the life, the death, the burial, the resurrection, the ascension of our Lord, rest upon the declarations of eye witnesses, friends and enemies, upon the records of nations, upon monumental testimony, upon traditional evidence, upon fulfilment of prophecy, upon miraculous performances. There is evidence that the reasoner may examine, and of which no close examiner can possibly be a sceptic. All that is recorded of our Lord, from his birth to his ascension, are not deeds of darkness; the curtain of night was not spread over them, and the trumpet of fame afterwards employed to sound them through the earth. No! multitudes were witnesses of their truth. Though born in a manger, angelic hosts proclaimed the mighty fact, and with heavenly songs ushered in the Messiah's reign; shepherds saw, and listened to the lofty praise, and, obedient to the divine command, came, examined, and were convinced of its truth, and spread the joyful tidings around the nation. By divine testimony, the sacred news was carried to distant nations, and the fages of the East became, unintentionally, heralds of it to the court of Herod, proclaiming to the king of Israel that He, whose right it was to reign, had come down from heaven to lift up his standard, and to sway his sceptre over his people. The miracles that he performed, and the doctrines he taught, was in the face of multitudes, multitudes who could see, and judge for themselves, concerning the truth of the facts; his enemies themselves were forced to yield their unwilling testimony to the truth. Multitudes saw him die; the cross was erected on a lofty spot, and being on a solemn festival, thousands could not
but

but observe it ; upwards of five hundred witnessed his resurrection and ascension, conversing with him upon the nature of his kingdom, and for forty days receiving his instruction how to carry on the work he had committed to them : and from the day that he was crucified, to the present hour, the breaking of bread has been a standing memorial, kept up by his disciples, of the truth of these things : things not done in a corner, but in the face of day ; not mysterious things, which might be performed by slight of hand, but things of which the senses of the most simple understanding could well judge ; those things which the pens of many eye witnesses have recorded ; the pens of their adversaries have confirmed them, and standing memorials of their truth have, from their first institution, from the time the facts were performed, been invariably kept up. Falsehood carries not with it such evidence ; more and stronger evidence it is unreasonable to demand ; but if demanded it is to be obtained ; evidence internal in the nature of things ; evidence external in the lives of the professors, the accomplishment of prophecy, and the faithfulness of God. Oh then, search the Scriptures, observe the beauty, the excellence, the justness of their morality ; see in them manifested the wisdom, goodness, and power of God ; see how every thing in them is adapted to the want and understanding of man, and particularly when you investigate the prophetic writings ; your faith then will be confirmed, your mind enlightened, and your whole soul astonished at the fore-knowledge of God manifested in them. They may be divided into two great heads :

1. Such as related to the first coming of Christ, his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, his glorification at the right hand of the father, his second coming to judge his servants, and reign over the earth, his second judgment of all, and his final subduing all unto himself.

2. The prophecies that relate to individuals, to cities, to states, and to remarkable facts : prophecy is of great importance, it is a sure word, a certain confirming testimony of the truth of revelation.

“ King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets ? ” Thou hast read them, thou hast heard them commented on ; thou hast considered them as the divine declaration concerning things to come deserves to be considered ; they all speak of Jesus ; each hath said a something, less or more, upon his sufferings, and his following glory. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets ? If thou dost believe, O King, thou must become a Christian, for they all testify of Christ.

O thou

O thou who art here before me, who hast read over the records that God hath given concerning his son, believest thou the prophets? They all testify of Jesus, the crucified, but now the highly exalted saviour. The first prophecy that appears concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, comes under the form of a threatening, but containeth in it a fulness of mercy. Genesis, iii. 15. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." We have an infallible comment upon this prophecy, by the inspired John. 1 John, iii. 8. "The devil sinneth from the beginning; for this purpose, the son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Yes, Christ shall bruise the head of Satan; he shall destroy his power; he has even now taken the prey from the hand of the mighty; but he will go on rescuing captives, overturning his authority, crushing to pieces his power, and delivering from him the children of disobedience, in whose heart he now ruleth.

Again, God speaking to Abraham, saith, Gen. xxii. 18. "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Which prophecy Paul explains, Galatians, iii. 16. "To Abraham and to his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one; and to thy seed, which is Christ." Thus is the Old Testament explained and confirmed by the new. In the promise the seed of Abraham is pointed out, the bleaser of all the nations of the earth; and in the inspired comment upon the promise, the attention is taken off from the various descendants of Abraham, and fixed upon one, upon Christ, the son of Abraham, the son of God, "upon him, who loved us, and gave himself for us."

The same promise was made and confirmed to Isaac and to Jacob, and made to extend beyond all the nations, even unto all the families of the earth, that the justification of Christ may be upon all, whether believers or unbelievers, even to the ends of the earth; for he was appointed the saviour of all, the propitiatory covering for the sins of the whole world; and this justification is made ours by faith; being completely "upon all them that believe:" upon such "there is no condemnation;" their past transgressions are forgiven, their iniquities are covered over, their transgressions are hid, the sun of righteousness hath arisen upon them with healing in his wings.

Moses the faithful servant of Jehovah, was not only a great general, a great lawgiver, a faithful historian, and an excellent poet, but he was also a great prophet. Amongst others of the

prophecies that he delivered, is one recorded, Deut. xviii. 15. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. According to all that thou desirest of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God; neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not: and the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken; I will raise them up a prophet from amongst their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I command him; and it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

This prophecy can apply to none but the Lord Jesus Christ; in him alone does every character possessed by Moses, of king, priest, and prophet, meet; and at the same time, in one not of the Aaronical family. David was a king, and a prophet, but he was neither a priest or a lawgiver. Samuel was a prophet and a judge, or administrator of the laws of Moses, but he was not either a king, a priest, or lawgiver. Every king, priest, and prophet, sustained some peculiar character belonging to Moses; but in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in him only, do all the various perfect parts of that character meet; and the whole is confirmed in him, as the authority of Moses was confirmed amongst the children of Israel, by miraculous influence; all nature heard, and obeyed the voice of the son of God; and testified, that the Father had exalted him to be a prince and a saviour unto his people. Mahomet set himself up for this prophet whom the God of Israel was to raise up; but he failed in proof. Moses wrought miracles to prove his mission, and Christ wrought miracles to prove his; but the sword and the truncheon of Mahomet was that on which he founded his claim, and which, without convincing the understanding, subdued the hearts of the people's beneath him. But our blessed Lord, despised by the great, unbacked by an army, by the force of evidence alone, seized the understanding, and led the willing convert into full obedience to his will. How different this from the conduct of Mahomet; he demanded the implicit faith of his conquered slaves; whilst Moses and Christ demonstrated the truth of all they said, and asked of freemen that assent which publicity of conduct and demonstrative facts had a right to expect; they both called for credence to those things which were seen, felt, and lay open to their closest and coolest examination.

Christ

Christ was indeed a lawgiver like unto Moses: like him he gave new laws to the children of Israel, the seed of Abraham by faith; and by his sovereign will, unsupported by priestly authority, he totally annulled all the ancient religious ceremonies that Moses had instituted. Many prophets before him had wrought miracles, but the utmost they had dared to do on the authority of them, was to call back the transgressing sons of Israel to a more exact obedience to the Mosaic institutions; but Jesus, having established by miracles his divine authority, then annulled the laws of Moses; declaring that those institutions were only typical of that superior dispensation which he came to introduce, appealing to Moses and the prophets as evidence for him. Surely then, O king Agrippa, if thou believest the prophet Moses, thou must also believe in Jesus of Nazareth, for he prophesied of him.

Hearken to the voice of David: looking beyond the days in which he lived, like one having authority, he makes the Israelites in their most solemn services of praise demand, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and their rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Messiah." How exactly did the prophet describe the unnatural union of wicked men to condemn our blessed Lord! "For of a truth against the holy Jesus, the Messiah, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatever thy hand and thy counsel, O Jehovah, determined before to be done." This psalm contains a striking description of the first grand opposition made to the person, kingdom, and government of Jesus the Messiah, and the consequences that should follow. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision: then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."

However powerful the combination might appear to man--- however well calculated to answer the destructive intentions of earth and hell---in the eyes of Jehovah they were ridiculous; he beheld their mad attempts with scorn; he frustrated the evil of their intentions, and forced them to become the willing instruments of accomplishing all that he before determined should come to pass. Let the heathen boast of their Jove and fate. Fate is the sovereign will of our God, and all the powers of hell, and earth, and heaven, leagued together, shall not frustrate it. As well might the feeble sons of mortality attempt to pluck the solar orb from its sphere, or cast the shadow

of death over its glorious display of illuminated nature, as to attempt to oppose and bring to nought the decrees of infinite and incontrollable power. He whose almighty fiat called all creation into existence, has pronounced the decree, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Demand of me, and I will give the heathen, thine inheritance; and the uttermost parts of the earth thy possession." Yes, O King Agrippa, I know that thou art acquainted with these prophecies: they are completely fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; and he hath demanded of the Father that he will accomplish his promise, and cause "the world to know that he sent him" to subdue and rule the nations. Be wise, now, therefore, O ye kings! be instructed, O ye judges of the earth! Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling: kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way. When his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

The book of Psalms, in the plainest and most explicit manner, points out the particulars of the death of our blessed Lord. "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws: and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet; they may tell all my bones; they look and stare upon me; they part my garments among them, and cast lots for my vesture."

It is truly astonishing, that any one can believe the prophecies, and not see them, in the most wonderful manner, accomplished in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. David could not speak these things of himself; his hands and feet never were pierced; the weight of his body, supported by his wounded members, forced not his bones from their sockets; through the agonizing torments of a lingering, cruel death, his heart melted not like wax within him; nor through the fierceness of extreme pain was his mouth parched up; neither did the hell hounds of war and rapine surround him, and cast lots for his garments. David could not describe either his own sufferings or the sufferings of a man, dying by the extremity of pain upon the cross. In those days such a death was not known; it became the sons of science and politeness to invent such an infernal way of making the innocent and the uncondemned pass from the cares and anxieties of this life to the sacred joys of a better. For this mode of dying was unknown, till the mad ambitious Alexander, falsely called the Great, invented it

it as a punishment on the Tyrians, for daring to defend themselves against his insolence and rapacity. But all the particulars of this cruel death met in Jesus the beloved, the son of David. He was poured out like water; when from the extreme bitterness of his soul, agonizing in the garden, the sweat poured down him, in large drops, like blood from a lacerated vessel; when hung upon the cross, his strained members must have been all disjointed. *Alas!* who can tell at that awful time the pain he must have endured; a body that contained a soul like his, must have been made of delicate texture; liable through the whole of his pilgrimage to the softest feelings of humanity; what tortures must it then have felt! The soul in full possession of every sense, whilst the whole frame was torn and strained to the most excruciating torture; his heart, surely, must have melted within his fevered body, like wax before the scorching fire; whilst his whole strength, dried up by the excess of anguish, felt that most unbearable of pains, the extreme of debility from an unnerved frame; whilst the moistening juices, which the God of nature has kindly provided, to lubricate the parts in action, were dried up, and caused the unmoistened tongue to cleave to the roof of the parched jaws.

Every thing prophesied concerning the death of our blessed Lord took place, even to the minutest tittle. For instance, who would not have expected, from what happens at every execution, that the surrounding multitude would have melted into pity, at the tortures of the awful death he endured! Had he been a murderer, they doubtless would have felt for his sufferings. We do not find that they made any exultations, over the two dying thieves, that were crucified with him; they had been robbers, and perhaps worse, yet they were not insulted with their crimes: no triumphant exclamations added aggravated horrors to their expiring thoughts: but Jesus, the friend of the fatherless, the comforter of the widow; he, who had been eyes to the blind, a tongue to the dumb, and limbs to the maimed; he, whose whole life was one continual scene of benevolence; even he, when unjustly and illegally put to death, had his dying moments insulted with, "He saved others, cannot he save himself? If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross." These were, indeed, the beasts of the people; fierce, and strong as the bulls of Basan; gaping upon him with their mouths like ravening and roaring lions.

Again, who would have thought that the psalm should be accomplished, which says, "They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

One could not have supposed, that any in a civilized nation could have been so cruel ; but so they were. For it is written, " And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall ; and when he had tasted thereof he would not drink."

The book of the Psalms, is the only book that speaks of his resurrection from the dead. " Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." Though but once expressed, yet how exactly was it accomplished ; as Peter, reasoning upon this passage, has shewn, that the patriarch David could not possibly speak of himself, for he was dead and buried, and his sepulchre, even at that time, was amongst them. " Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up the Messiah, to sit upon his throne ; he, seeing this, spake before-hand of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption." Glory be to God for the gift of his prophetic word. It is a sure and abundant testimony to the doctrines of Christianity, of which there is not any more important than the resurrection of Christ ; and therefore, there is no historical fact whatsoever that has such undeniable evidence of its truth. There is recorded no less than eleven different appearances of Christ after his resurrection from the dead ; one of which was to five hundred brethren ; all of whom appear to have been, in a general way, unbelieving of it, until demonstrated to their senses that it was so ; and then so convinced were they that Jesus had arisen from the dead, that it became within them a constant spring of action, calling forth all the powers of their mind and body in its defence. This made them to march as in triumph to the cross, the sword, or the stake, proud to seal their testimony with their blood.

As we appeal to prophecy that the Messiah was to die, and then rise from the dead, so likewise to the sacred writings must we appeal to prove that he ought to ascend up on high. Speaking of things that were to be, as though they had been past, the Psalmist shouts exultingly, " Thou hast ascended up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men, yea, the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Again, it is spoken of in a most triumphant song, " Lift up your heads, O ye gates ! and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in. Who is this king of glory ? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift
up

up your heads, O ye gates! even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in. Who is this king of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory." With what dignity does Jesus, the glorified king, demand the gates of heaven to be opened for his admission. If the prophetic description is so grand, how beyond expression glorious must it have been, to have seen the sovereign of all nature, demand admission into these blessed mansions of unclouded day. I think I speak but according to the mind of God, when I apply the 47th Psalm to this grand event. "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our king, sing praises: for God is the king of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding." If such glorious songs of exultation, resounded through the ethereal courts when Jesus ascended up on high, how much more glorious will be the descent of the son of God, when attended by angelic miriads, and the first-born sons of God: he shall leave the courts of Jehovah, and descend to that mountain from which he ascended, there to claim the kingdom for his own, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.

The Psalmist has taken a look into the ethereal courts, in the cxth Psalm, and beheld the welcome reception that the Messiah, the son of David, should receive on his return from his state of debasement and trial here below: "Jehovah said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Jehovah shall send the rod of thy strength out of Sion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth. Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Jehovah, at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath; he shall judge among the heathen; he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries; he shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up his head." How exactly does this psalm coincide with the apostle's language concerning the present residence of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool;" who, saith the apostles, "the heavens must retain, until the times of the restitution of all things." Yes, he shall sit upon the throne of his father, in glory; until that long expected period, when surrounded with immortal honors, he shall come clothed in power to rule over the earth,

earth, and bow the nations beneath his sceptre. In this glorious day of his power, his people, who for so many ages have hated his name, shall become his willing subjects. Like the drops of dew upon the herbage, shall be the number of his subjects, when a nation shall be born unto him in a day--- when Jesus, the saviour, cometh as the seed of David, to claim his paternal inheritance, and as the first born of God to be the great High Priest of the human race; then shall Jehovah judge among the nations; yea, he shall arise in awful vengeance, and sweep the miriads of Gog and Magog from the land; he shall fill the valley of the son of Hinnom with the dead bodies; he will go on conquering, and to conquer, bruising the head and ruler of the nations beneath his feet; he will drink continually by the way, of the fountain of life-giving water, therefore shall he lift up his head; yea, he shall exalt himself gloriously, for Jehovah will put all his enemies beneath his feet.

It is on account of the many great changes that will take place in the state of the world, and its inhabitants, at the second coming of Christ, with regard to the holiness and happiness of the one, and the beauty of the other, that the prophets, and particularly in the Psalms, with such holy joy, anticipate the wonders of the Messiah's reign. "Make a joyful noise unto Jehovah, all ye lands, serve Jehovah with gladness, come before his presence with singing. Know ye that Jehovah is God, he hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise; be thankful and bless his name. For Jehovah is good, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth is to all generations." Hence it is, that in this triumphant song, they look forward to that sacred day, shouting aloud, "O sing unto Jehovah a new song, for he hath done marvellous things; his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory. Jehovah hath made known his salvation; his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen; he hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise unto Jehovah, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise." These glorious exultations are not to be wondered at, when we consider the present state of the world; individuals living for themselves; oppression through all ranks of mankind directing their actions, whilst hypocrisy guides and covers them with a veil of love. Examine the present state of mankind, and ask, where is the village in the world, where

where the happiness and comfort of the whole is the utmost wish of each individual? Say, what is man by birth but the children of one parent; yet, what is man really, but the oppressor, and the oppressed? He that is this day trod upon as dirt, exerts every power of his mind, that to-morrow he may trample others beneath his feet. This ought not to be; to be an instrument of universal happiness, is truly the birthright of every man; and when Jesus the Saviour cometh to rule the earth in righteousness, men will lay claim to this grand and universal prerogative; the possession thereof shall spread peace, joy, and plenty throughout nature's wide domain. Jesus the conqueror comes, not to drag his conquered vassals at his chariot wheels; not to beautilize the sons of men; but he cometh to destroy oppression, to give universal peace, to lay a foundation for the recovery of his fallen creatures, and to finally and fully restore to happiness and duty, the perverted works of God. All hail! thou Son of the Highest; soon mayest thou appear, and commence the promised period of universal and unending bliss.

Influenced by the prophetic spirit, the prophets often speak of the things that were to be as though they were. Thus Isaiah, speaking of the birth of the Messiah, says, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government, and peace, there shall be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever; the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." Again, he speaks of Christ, "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel." The sacred historians record these prophecies as fulfilled in the person of our blessed Lord. After having related the miraculous conception of the blessed virgin, he makes this observation, "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord, by the prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name, Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us." Again, Isaiah speaks of the miracles that he shall perform, as a proof of his Messiahship. "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgement unto the gentiles; he shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his

voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth; he shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein, I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant for the people, for a light of the gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." Many other passages of the prophecies speak of the temper, the conduct, and the deeds of the Messiah who was to come. In conformity to these prophecies, when John sent his disciples to ask him, "Art thou he that was to come, or are we to look for another?" In that very hour he gave them an answer, not in word, but by facts; he accomplished the prophecies. In that same hour "he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits, and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things you have seen and heard, how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached, and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." Thus we find the sacred oracles, in whatsoever they foretell, leave no doubt upon the mind concerning its accomplishment, because all their proofs are appeals to the understanding of man; they demand our faith according to the strength of their evidence.

Another character is by Isaiah applied to our Lord; a character which, like all the other marks of the Messiah, can only be said properly to belong to him. "As many were astonished at thee, (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men,) so shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him, for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider." What a contrast is here between the suffering and the glorified state of the Messiah. In none doth these characters meet, but in the Lord Jesus Christ; he was despised and abhorred by the nation, the beauty of his countenance was marred by the streaming blood issuing from his thorn pierced temples, and his form (by the anguish of his soul, as peculiarly the man of sorrow, added to the hor-

ror

ror of his sufferings) was more disfigured than the sons of men." But since his ascension how has he sprinkled many nations ! He has rained down upon them showers of heavenly truth ; and when he cometh to reign on this earth, then shall the whole multitude of the nations be watered by him ; then shall they indeed live, and the kings of the earth shall bring their tributes and lay at his feet, whilst they themselves stand listening to catch truth and wisdom as it flows from his mouth. Yea, they shall behold such glory as they could not have conceived could possibly have been, and such heights and depths of knowledge as they never before heard of shall they then meditate upon.

It is an impossibility to read the prophecies with attention, without beholding Jesus of Nazareth, as represented in the gospel, in the most prominent features. The whole of the liiid. chap. of Isaiah, contains such a description of the sufferings of our Lord, and his mode of burial, that was there not demonstrative evidence of its existence for centuries before the facts happened, we should be almost tempted to think an eye-witness of the transactions had recorded them. " He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so opened he not his mouth. He was taken from prison, and from judgement, and who shall declare his generation ? For he was cut off out of the land of the living ; for the transgression of my people was he stricken ; and he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich was his tomb." Say, do you believe the prophets ? What a number of little particulars are here. The Messiah, the king of Israel, shall stand like a vile malefactor at the bar of judgement, and there be silent amidst all the accusations that should be brought against him ; that he, the hope of Israel, the desire of nations, unprotected, and unresisting, should be brought forth like a lamb from the flock, to be offered up in sacrifice ; that he should die an infamous death, and yet have an honourable burial, were things inconsistent and incredible. Say, dost thou believe the prophets ? Then, canst thou read of the death of Jesus, and not believe upon him ?

Zechariah, speaking of the entire dissolution of the covenant which God had made with the children of Israel as a nation, mentions one circumstance that should at that time take place. " And I said unto them, if ye think good give me my price, and if not, forbear ; so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the potter, a goodly price, that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter, in

the house of the Lord." How circumstantially exact did Judas fulfil this prophecy. Surely this fact could not have been unknown to King Agrippa; Paul, therefore, might with great propriety of application say unto him, Believest thou the prophets?

Equally exact, Micah declares the place of the Messiah's birth. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall he come forth unto me, to be a ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting." This prophecy, though a singular one, concerning the birth-place of the Messiah, yet was literally accomplished, although to fulfil it the whole Roman empire was set in motion. When the virgin conceived, she was about eighty miles distant from Bethlehem. Augustus, the greatest of the Roman Emperors, was, on his part, unintentionally made the instrument of its fulfilment; he decreed the whole of the empire should be taxed. Three things, as far as regards our Lord, are very remarkable in this taxation. 1. As it accomplished the prophecy, by causing Joseph and Mary to journey to Bethlehem, the place of their family residence. 2. It proves that Joseph and Mary, being of the family of David, were heirs of David; for the taxation was upon landed property. The inheritance of the family of David was at Bethlehem; had they been younger branches they would have had no inheritance to be taxed; but being the heirs of that family, it was necessary, for the preservation of the family possession, that they should personally appear to be enrolled. 3. It precisely fixes the period when our Saviour came to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself when Augustus was Emperor of Rome, and Cyrenius Governor of Syria. By this means also the records of the heathen empire became the records of the Christian faith. Truly, the earth belongeth unto Jehovah, and he ruleth all things according to the counsels of his own will. Say, O infidel! wilt thou not believe the prophets? Such an extraordinary coincidence of circumstances could not be the work of chance, but is a wonderful manifestation of the almighty over-ruling power of God.

Many things there are, besides the doctrines of the cross, that are treated of by the prophets. By the prophetic writings we do more than barely defend Christianity from the attacks of infidelity; for to defend Christianity is a slight thing; let the infidel bring all his boasted artillery of reason, let him make strong his battery, let him mount his cannon, let him pour in his heaviest fire, still firm and unshaken stand its bulwarks,
even

even though defended by a weak believer, indifferently well acquainted with divine revelation. Yea, more, whilst discoursing on the prophecies relating to other matters, we may turn assailants, and drive the reasoning deist from all his strong hold. For instance, the mode of life of the Arabians, and their preservation, as a people distinct from all others, cannot be accounted for by natural causes. A weak, defenceless people, contemptible in their persons and arms, have been attacked by well disciplined armies, commanded by the greatest conquerors, and yet they have never been conquered; but weak, and disunited as they are, yet they have always lived by pillage, and at times have conquered the finest parts, and the most populous of the inhabited globe. Reason will, in vain, be unable to account for this; we cannot unravel the mysteries thereof; every other nation has its rising, its meridian, and its setting sun; but this nation, though driven back oft times to its ancient boundaries, always have those boundaries unbroken. Invincible when surrounded by conquerors; free amidst nations of slaves; freebooters and robbers amongst the civilized nations of the globe: revelation unfolds the mystery. It is there we find that it is Jehovah, who giveth bounds to the nations, that hath given Arabia to the descendants of Ishmael, and declared that he should be a wild man, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him, and that he should dwell in the presence of all his brethren. Nothing but infinite foresight could have foretold, and infinite powers could have so ordered circumstances, that a man's whole posterity should thus, for many ages, be acting against every man, and every man against them, and yet should be preserved unconquerable amidst surrounding enemies. Yet this is the case with the whole of that nation, and they give this as a reason for it, that their father Ishmael gave them liberty to attack, enslave, and pillage every man, but by divine authority, promised them, that they should never be enslaved.

In like manner the Lord by Moses threatens the Israelites in case of disobedience, that he will "scatter them amongst all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone; and amongst these nations thou shalt have no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind." And in like manner the other prophets speak of this people; and behold, ye infidels, at this day the accomplishment of it. They have

have rejected the prophet like unto Moses, and for it they are cut off from being the people of God ; and yet, in the midst of all, they dwell alone, a nation, a despised nation, in the midst of the nations. Where are the Midianites, the Moabites, the Ishmaelites, and many other nations, the ancient enemies of the Jews ? They are cut off from amidst the nations, even their names are almost lost from the records of the earth ; but this poor humbled people still remain, and will continue so to do, a distinct people, till their elder brother, the abhorred of the nation, till he shall come again the second time, without sin, unto their salvation.

The prophets prophesied of the Messiah, even Jesus of Nazareth, and the truth of their prophecies have been established by the fulfilment of their denunciations against such of the nations and cities as were cruel and oppressive to the children of Israel. Where is Nineveh, the mighty, containing such a number of inhabitants ? her name is perished from the face of the earth. Where is Babylon the lofty, the queen of cities, and the mistress of the nations ? her strength is decayed, her beauty is gone, the vestiges of her former foundations are buried beneath the floods, and the beauty of the fertile plains which surrounded her have lost their ancient glory, and are almost pathless as the sandy desert. Where is Tyre, the merchant of the nations, the ruler of the mighty waters, she, whose snowy plumage winged her a path over the stormy deep ? Alas ! she is gone, her bulwarks lay plunged beneath those seas which they formerly governed, her lofty palaces are fallen, and the solid rock is alone left, a humble monument of her former situation and her present ruin. Should any one, passing through this populous town, survey the numerous mighty fabrics which exalt their heads unto the heavens, whilst their solid foundations, like nature's primæval rocks, are buried deep into the bowels of the earth—should such a one, admiring its vast extent, its opulence, and magnificence, be told by some half-starved, contemptible looking servant of the living God, " Thus, saith the Lord, Behold, I am against thee, O ! destroying London, who destroyeth all the earth, and I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain, and they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for a foundation, but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the Lord ;" Who would think it credible ? the prophet of the Lord would be considered as a madman, or punished as a vagabond ! his mission would be rejected, and considered as impossible ; yet thus did
God,

God, by the mouth of Jeremiah, threaten Babylon, the glory of the world, and the pride and wonder of the whole earth. And it is come to pass; her broad walls, with the hundred strong towers upon them, her beautiful hanging gardens, her glorious palaces, and all her former beauties, are buried beneath the stagnate waters of the Euphrates; her former defence and ornament is her present ruin: it is now the habitation of venomous reptiles, and the dread of mankind. And as it was with Babylon so it was with Tyre, Nineveh, &c. the word of Jehovah hath been long accomplished, and they exhibit to mankind the hand of Jehovah fully accomplishing whatsoever he threatens.

"Judgment on leaden wings may slowly rise,
But spreadeth sure destruction as she flies;
Eternal ruin marks her direful road,
Dire trophies of a sin avenging God."

Let me here pause—Let me put to you the question that Paul of Tarsus, put to King Agrippa.—Believest thou the prophets? Thou beholdest what God hath done in the days that are past? His arm is not shortened; that which he hath declared he will perform shall surely come to pass. The present is an eventful period; since the seventh trumpet hath begun to sound, what astonishing events have begun to take place. It was as it were but yesterday, when we ourselves would not have given credit to them. Overturning! overturning! overturning! is now the language of scripture. War, famine, and pestilence, are the weapons of his hand; it is with these he punisheth the inhabitants of the earth; it is with these he teacheth mankind to reflect upon the end of their existence, and bringeth them to the acknowledgement of himself; it is with these that he is now levelling the pride, the self-will, and the ambition of mankind. These are the mighty messengers who go before crying, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make a strait path for our God. Jesus, the mighty conqueror comes; I hear the rolling of his warlike car, and mark the footsteps of his horses steeped in blood. How awful will be their fate who oppose him. Like water shall their blood be poured out, and the mountain of their flesh shall be spread like dung upon the face of the earth. "Therefore, wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them my indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." Time will not permit an enlargement upon this subject,

subject; the melancholy scene is began; would ye escape the awful vengeance, flee ye to the chamber of his love; hide yourselves beneath the shadow of his wings, until the overwhelming tempest is past; for he alone is a sanctuary from the storm, and a hiding place from the tempest.

But the prophecies leave us not here amidst the horrors of darkness and the shadows of death, but they, in many places, positively declare, that Jesus will come, and all his saints shall come with him; faith now realizes the approaching scene, and hails his presence, whilst every beating thought cries out, Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly! Come, thou Almighty Saviour, rule over the earth from sea to sea, and from shore to shore! Oh! come, and sway over all thy sceptre of peace.

Some of you may ask, Are you not afraid of preaching in this manner? Are you not afraid of giving offence unto the governing powers? No, indeed, not I; I would not give offence to any man, or any sort of men; but I would to God that all the ruling powers were here now that they might hear that Jesus, the Messiah, will soon come in person to claim the kingdoms for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; and that till he comes, however vain men may attempt it, there will not be any universal monarchy take place. His kingdom is universal, and his alone; and upon the throne of Israel, not by a spiritual, but by an earthly reign, will he establish it, and it shall continue unshaken for a thousand years. Now, what is there in all this ought to give umbrage to the kings and princes of the earth? I call not on them to resign their sceptres but to sway them in righteousness, that when he cometh they may hold them as fiefs of his will, and do homage to him as their supreme Lord. For when he cometh, they shall either rejoice to own his supreme authority, or they shall perish before him. For "he shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish, and of the isles, shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts; yea, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him." In that day "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it; and many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and

and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and he shall rebuke many peoples: and they shall beat their swords into plough shares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Happy period this! my soul ardently longeth to behold it. I dare not condemn their motives who spiritualize these and multitudes of similar and equally glorious passages; but I pity their weakness; they know not where such conduct leadeth them, whilst it unintentionally causeth them to treat with contempt the word of the living God.

"Believest thou the prophets?" Under the present awful state of things what joy what consolation will they afford!-----Time, with rapid wings, is, by dreadful judgments, ushering in the grand millennial reign of Jesus: then will the mysterious scene of providence be unravelled, and all the wonders of divine love be laid open unto men. Transporting thought! what amazing intricacies will then be laid open, when providence and prophecy are fully known.

Prophecy, like the night and day, from infancy to manhood, leads us on step by step, from light to darkness, and then from darkness to light, unto the grand concluding period, which some of you are distinguished by the name of Universalists for believing. The prophecies declare, that the head of the serpent must be bruised---that God must be all in all; rebellion therefore must be banished from the universe---the foes of Jesus must become his footstool---the curse must be no more---tears must be wiped from every eye---all must be drawn unto Jesus---all must be made new: for Jehovah hath sworn by himself, the righteous word is gone out of his mouth, and shall not return, that unto him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear, surely each shall say, In Jehovah have I righteousness and strength. To him shall they come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed; for at the name of Jesus the Restorer every knee shall bow, of those in heaven, of those in earth, and of those under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of the cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. Yes, blessed be the name of God our universal parent, Jesus the Restorer hath given himself a ransom for all, and this is the proper season to bear testimony to it.

Christian, believest thou the prophets? I know thou dost. What sources of consolation, of holy peace, and joy, and hope, do they afford thee! In vain shall infidelity raise against thee its hydra head, boldly upon the sure word of prophecy shalt thou attack the poisonous serpent, and lay him dead beneath thy feet.

Infidelity is in part to be attributed to the imperfect mode in which Christianity has been preached. It has either been spiritualized into tatters, or it has been reasoned out of its soul and energy. The partial truth, and not the whole truth, has been spoken---The doctrines taught as the doctrines of the Scripture represent the Deity as imperfect in wisdom, love, and power. Surely that Almighty Being who formed his creature man, formed him for happiness; yet, on whatsoever scheme as hath hitherto been taught you consider it, you make him to intend, really or impotently, endless misery to the greatest part of the workmanship of his hands. But blessed be the great Former of all, he hath, by his holy apostles and prophets, taught us better things: he hath exhibited the beauty of his character in the all-subduing perfection of divine love. In the gladdening prospect infidelity loses its hold upon us, Scripture becomes harmonized, and worthy to be the revelation of God. Standing on this foundation, our souls can rise aloft above the cloudy scenes of a dark providence, and stand unshaken amidst a war of elements, a crash of nations, and the discordant clang of arms. Believest thou the prophets, O Christian? then let an holy obedience manifest thy faith---so shalt thou find peace and joy and righteousness here, and glory hereafter. AMEN.

L O N D O N:

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